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SIR GIBBIE.

VOL. II.

SIR GIBBIE.

BY

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“DAVID ELGINBROD,” “ROBERT FALCONER,”

“ALEC FORBES OF HOWGLEN,”

&c., &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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SIR GIBBIE.

CHAPTER I.

MORE SCHOOLING.

THE first opportunity Donal had, he questioned Fergus as to his share in the ill-usage of Gibbie. Fergus treated the inquiry as an impertinent interference, and mounted his high horse at once. What right had his father's herd-boy to question him as to his conduct? He put it so to him and in nearly just as many words. Thereupon answered Donal—

“It's this, ye see, Fergus: ye hae been unco guid to me, an' I'm mair obligatit till ye nor I can say. But it wad be a scunnerfu' thing to tak the len' o' buiks frae ye, an' spier questions at ye 'at I canna mak oot mysel', an' syne

gang awa despisin' ye i' my hert for cruelty an' wrang. What was the cratur punished for? Tell me that. Accordin' till yer aunt's ain accoont, he had taen naething, an' had dune naething but guid."

"Why didn't he speak up then, and defend himself, and not be so damned obstinate?" returned Fergus. "He wouldn't open his mouth to tell his name, or where he came from even. I couldn't get him to utter a single word. As for his punishment, it was by the laird's orders that Angus Mac Pholp took the whip to him. I had nothing to do with it."—Fergus did not consider the punishment he had himself given him as worth mentioning—as indeed, except for honesty's sake, it was not, beside the other.

"Weel, I'll be a man some day, an' Angus 'll hae to saddle wi' me!" said Donal through his clenched teeth. "Man, Fergus! the cratur's as dumb's a worum. I diinna believe 'at ever he spak a word in's life."

This cut Fergus to the heart, for he was far from being without generosity or pity. How many things a man who is not awake to side

strenuously with the good in him against the evil, who is not on his guard lest himself should mislead himself, may do, of which he will one day be bitterly ashamed!—a trite remark, it may be, but, reader, that will make the thing itself no easier to bear, should you ever come to know you have done a thing of the sort. I fear, however, from what I know of Fergus afterwards, that he now, instead of seeking about to make some amends, turned the strength that should have gone in that direction, to the justifying of himself to himself in what he had done. Anyhow, he was far too proud to confess to Donal that he had done wrong—too much offended at being rebuked by one he counted so immeasurably his inferior, to do the right thing his rebuke set before him. What did the mighty business matter! The little rascal was nothing but a tramp; and if he didn't deserve his punishment this time, he had deserved it a hundred times without having it, and would ten thousand times again. So reasoned Fergus, while the feeling grew upon Donal that *the cratur* was of some superior race—came from some other and nobler world. I

would remind my reader that Donal was a Celt, with a nature open to every fancy of love or awe—one of the same breed with the foolish Galatians, and like them ready to be bewitched; but bearing a heart that welcomed the light with glad rebound—loved the lovely, nor loved it only, but turned towards it with desire to become like it. Fergus too was a Celt in the main, but was spoiled by the paltry ambition of being distinguished. He was not in love with loveliness, but in love with praise. He saw not a little of what was good and noble, and would fain be such, but mainly that men might regard him for his goodness and nobility; hence his practical notion of the good was weak, and of the noble, paltry. His one desire in doing anything, was to be approved of or admired in the same—approved of in the opinions he held, in the plans he pursued, in the doctrines he taught; admired in the poems in which he went halting after Byron, and in the eloquence with which he meant one day to astonish great congregations. There was nothing original as yet discoverable in him; nothing to deliver him from the poor imitative apery in

which he imagined himself a poet. He did possess one invaluable gift—that of perceiving and admiring, more than a little, certain forms of the beautiful; but it was rendered merely ridiculous by being conjoined with the miserable ambition—poor as that of any mountebank emperor—to be himself admired for that admiration. He mistook also sensibility for faculty, nor perceived that it was at best but a probable sign that he might be able to do something or other with pleasure, perhaps with success. If any one judge it hard that men should be made with ambitions to whose objects they can never attain, I answer, ambition is but the evil shadow of aspiration; and no man ever followed the truth, which is the one path of aspiration, and in the end complained that he had been made this way or that. Man is made to be that which he is made most capable of desiring—but it goes without saying that he must desire the thing itself and not its shadow. Man is of the truth, and while he follows a lie, no indication his nature yields will hold, except the fear, the discontent, the sickness of soul, that tell him he is wrong. If he say, “I care

not for what you call the substance—it is to me the shadow; I want what you call the shadow.” the only answer is, that, to all eternity, he can never have it: a shadow can never be had.

Ginevra was hardly the same child after the experience of that terrible morning. At no time very much at home with her father, something had now come between them, to remove which all her struggles to love him as before were unavailing. The father was too stupid, too unsympathetic, to take note of the look of fear that crossed her face if ever he addressed her suddenly; and when she was absorbed in fighting the thoughts that *would* come, he took her constraint for sullenness.

With a cold spot in his heart where once had dwelt some genuine regard for Donal, Fergus went back to college. Donal went on herding the cattle, cudgeling Hornie, and reading what books he could lay his hands on: there was no supply through Fergus any more, alas! The year before, ere he took his leave, he had been careful to see Donal provided with at least books for study; but this time he left him to

shift for himself. He was small because he was proud, spiteful because he was conceited. He would let Donal know what it was to have lost his favour ! But Donal did not suffer much, except in the loss of the friendship itself. He managed to get the loan of a copy of Burns—better meat for a strong spirit than the poetry of Byron or even Scott. An innate cleanliness of soul rendered the occasional coarseness to him harmless, and the mighty torrent of the man's life, broken by occasional pools reflecting the stars ; its headlong hatred of hypocrisy and false religion ; its generosity, and struggling conscientiousness ; its failures and its repentances, roused much in the heart of Donal. Happily the copy he had borrowed, had in it a tolerable biography ; and that, read along with the man's work, enabled him, young as he was, to see something of where and how he had failed, and to shadow out to himself, not altogether vaguely, the perils to which the greatest must be exposed who cannot rule his own spirit, but, like a mere child, reels from one mood into another—at the will of—what ?

From reading Burns, Donal learned also not

a little of the capabilities of his own language ; for, Celt as he was by birth and country and mental character, he could not speak the Gaelic : that language, soft as the speech of streams from rugged mountains, and wild as that of the wind in the tops of fir-trees, the language at once of bards and fighting men, had so far ebbed from the region, lingering only here and there in the hollow pools of old memories, that Donal had never learned it ; and the lowland Scotch, an ancient branch of English, dry and gnarled, but still flourishing in its old age, had become, instead, his mother-tongue ; and the man who loves the antique speech, or even the mere patois, of his childhood, and knows how to use it, possesses therein a certain kind of power over the hearts of men, which the most refined and perfect of languages cannot give, inasmuch as it has travelled farther from the original sources of laughter and tears. But the old Scottish itself is, alas ! rapidly vanishing before a poor, shabby imitation of modern English—itself a weaker language in sound, however enriched in words, since the days of Shakspeare, when it was far more

like Scotch in its utterance than it is now.

My mother-tongue, how sweet thy tone!
How near to good allied !
Were even my heart of steel or stone,
Thou wouldst drive out the pride.

So sings Klaus Groth, in and concerning his own Plattdeutsch—so nearly akin to the English.

To a poet especially is it an inestimable advantage to be able to employ such a language for his purposes. Not only was it the speech of his childhood, when he saw everything with fresh, true eyes, but it is itself a child-speech; and the child way of saying must always lie nearer the child way of seeing, which is the poetic way. Therefore, as the poetic faculty was now slowly asserting itself in Donal, it was of vast importance that he should know what *the* genius of Scotland had been able to do with his homely mother-tongue, for through that tongue alone, could what poetry he had in him have thoroughly fair play, and in turn do its best towards his development—which is the first and greatest use of poetry. It is a ruinous misjudgment—too contemptible to be asserted,

but not too contemptible to be acted upon, that the end of poetry is publication. Its true end is to help first the man who makes it along the path to the truth : help for other people may or may not be in it ; that, if it become a question at all, must be an after one. To the man who has it, the gift is invaluable ; and, in proportion as it helps him to be a better man, it is of value to the whole world ; but it may, in itself, be so nearly worthless, that the publishing of it would be more for harm than good. Ask any one who has had to perform the unenviable duty of editor to a magazine : he will corroborate what I say—that the quantity of verse good enough to be its own reward, but without the smallest claim to be uttered to the world, is enormous.

Not yet, however, had Donal written a single stanza. A line, or at most two, would now and then come into his head with a buzz, like a wandering honey-bee that had mistaken its hive—generally in the shape of a humorous male-diction on Hornie—but that was all.

In the meantime Gibbie slept and waked and slept again, night after night—with the loveli-

est days between, at the cottage on Glashgar. The morning after his arrival, the first thing he was aware of was Janet's face beaming over him, with a look in its eyes more like worship than benevolence. Her husband was gone, and she was about to milk the cow, and was anxious lest, while she was away, he should disappear as before. But the light that rushed into his eyes was in full response to that which kindled the light in hers, and her misgiving vanished: he could not love her like that and leave her. She gave him his breakfast of porridge and milk, and went to her cow.

When she came back, she found everything tidy in the cottage, the floor swept, every dish washed and set aside; and Gibbie was examining an old shoe of Robert's, to see whether he could not mend it. Janet, having therefore leisure, proceeded at once with joy to the construction of a garment she had been devising for him. The design was simple, and its execution easy. Taking a blue winsey petticoat of her own, drawing it in round his waist, and tying it over the chemise which was his only garment, she found, as she

had expected, that its hem reached his feet: she partly divided it up the middle, before and behind, and had but to backstitch two short seams, and there was a pair of sailor-like trousers, as tidy as comfortable! Gibbie was delighted with them. True, they had no pockets, but then he had nothing to put in pockets, and one might come to think of that as an advantage, Gibbie indeed had never had pockets, for the pockets of the garments he had had were always worn out before they reached him. Then Janet thought about a cap; but considering him a moment critically, and seeing how his hair stood out like thatch-eaves round his head, she concluded with herself, "There maun be some men as weel's women fowk, I'm thinkin', whause hair's gien them for a coverin'," and betook herself instead to her New Testament.

Gibbie stood by as she read in silence, gazing with delight, for he thought it must be a book of ballads like Donal's that she was reading. But Janet found his presence, his unresting attitude, and his gaze, discomposing. To worship freely, one must be alone, or else with fel-

low-worshippers. And reading and worshipping were often so mingled with Janet, as to form but one mental consciousness. She looked up therefore from her book, and said—

“Can ye read, laddie?”

Gibbie shook his head.

“Sit ye doon than, an’ I s’ read till ye.”

Gibbie obeyed more than willingly, expecting to hear some ancient Scots tale of love or chivalry. Instead, it was one of those love-awful, glory-sad chapters in the end of the Gospel of John, over which hangs the darkest cloud of human sorrow, shot through and through with the radiance of light eternal, essential, invincible. Whether it was the uncertain response to Janet’s tone merely, or to truth too loud to be heard save as a thrill, of some chord in his own spirit, having its one end indeed twisted around an earthly peg, but the other looped to a tail-piece far in the unknown—I cannot tell; it may have been that the name now and then recurring brought to his mind the last words of poor Sambo; anyhow, when Janet looked up, she saw the tears rolling down the child’s face. At the same

time, from the expression of his countenance, she judged that his understanding had grasped nothing. She turned therefore to the parable of the prodigal son, and read it. Even that had not a few words and phrases unknown to Gibbie, but he did not fail to catch the drift of the perfect story. For had not Gibbie himself had a father, to whose bosom he went home every night? Let but love be the interpreter, and what most wretched type will not serve the turn for the carriage of profoundest truth! The prodigal's lowest degradation, Gibbie did not understand; but Janet saw the expression of the boy's face alter with every tone of the tale, through all the gamut between the swines' trough and the arms of the father. Then at last he burst—not into tears—Gibbie was not much acquainted with weeping—but into a laugh of loud triumph. He clapped his hands, and in a shiver of ecstasy, stood like a stork upon one leg, as if so much of him was all that could be spared for this lower world, and screwed himself together.

Janet was well satisfied with her experiment. Most Scotch women, and more than most Scotch

men, would have rebuked him for laughing, but Janet knew in herself a certain tension of delight which nothing served to relieve but a wild laughter of holiest gladness ; and never in tears of deepest emotion did her heart appeal more directly to its God. It is the heart that is not yet sure of its God, that is afraid to laugh in his presence.

Thus had Gibbie his first lesson in the only thing worth learning, in that which, to be learned at all, demands the united energy of heart and soul and strength and mind ; and from that day he went on learning it. I cannot tell how, or what were the slow stages by which his mind budded and swelled until it burst into the flower of humanity, the knowledge of God. I cannot tell the shape of the door by which the Lord entered into that house, and took everlasting possession of it. I cannot even tell in what shape he appeared himself in Gibbie's thoughts—for the Lord can take any shape that is human. I only know it was not any un-human shape of earthly theology that he bore to Gibbie, when he saw him with "that inward eye, which is the bliss of solitude." For hap-

pily Janet never suspected how utter was Gibbie's ignorance. She never dreamed that he did not know what was generally said about Jesus Christ. She thought he must know as well as she the outlines of his story, and the purpose of his life and death, as commonly taught, and therefore never attempted explanations for the sake of which she would probably have found herself driven to use terms and phrases which merely substitute that which is intelligible because it appeals to what in us is low, and is itself both low and false, for that which, if unintelligible, is so because of its grandeur and truth. Gibbie's ideas of God he got all from the mouth of Theology himself, the Word of God; and to the theologian who will not be content with his teaching, the disciple of Jesus must just turn his back, that his face may be to his Master.

So, teaching him only that which she loved, not that which she had been taught, Janet read to Gibbie of Jesus, talked to him of Jesus, dreamed to him about Jesus; until at length—Gibbie did not think to watch, and knew nothing of the process by which it came about—

his whole soul was full of the man, of his doings, of his words, of his thoughts, of his life. Jesus Christ was in him—he was possessed by him. Almost before he knew, he was trying to fashion his life after that of his Master.

Between the two, it was a sweet teaching, a sweet learning. Under Janet, Gibbie was saved the thousand agonies that befall the conscientious disciple, from the forcing upon him, as the thoughts and will of the eternal father of our spirits, of the ill expressed and worse understood experiences, the crude conjectures, the vulgar imaginations of would-be teachers of the multitude. Containing truth enough to save those of sufficiently low development to receive such teaching without disgust, it contains falsehood enough, but for the spirit of God, to ruin all nobler—I mean all childlike natures, utterly; and many such it has gone far to ruin, driving them even to a madness in which they have died. Jesus alone knows the Father, and can reveal him. Janet studied only Jesus, and as a man knows his friend, so she, only infinitely better, knew her more than friend—her Lord and her God. Do I speak of

a poor Scotch peasant woman too largely for the reader whose test of truth is the notion of probability he draws from his own experience? Let me put one question to make the real probability clearer. Should it be any wonder, if Christ be indeed the natural Lord of every man, woman, and child, that a simple, capable nature, laying itself entirely open to him and his influences, should understand him? How should he be the Lord of that nature if such a thing were not possible, or were at all improbable—nay, if such a thing did not necessarily follow? Among women, was it not always to peasant women that heavenly messages came? See revelation culminate in Elizabeth and Mary, the mothers of John the Baptist and Jesus. Think how much fitter that it should be so;—that they to whom the word of God comes should be women bred in the dignity of a natural life, and familiarity with the large ways of the earth; women of simple and few wants, without distraction, and with time for reflection—compelled to reflection, indeed, from the enduring presence of an unsullied consciousness: for wherever there is a humble, thoughtful

nature, into that nature the divine consciousness, that is, the spirit of God, presses as into its own place. Holy women are to be found everywhere, but the prophetess is not so likely to be found in the city as in the hill-country.

Whatever Janet, then, might, perhaps—I do not know—have imagined it her duty to say to Gibbie had she surmised his ignorance, having long ceased to trouble her own head, she had now no inclination to trouble Gibbie's heart with what men call the plan of salvation. It was enough to her to find that he followed her Master. Being in the light she understood the light, and had no need of system, either true or false, to explain it to her. She lived by the word proceeding out of the mouth of God. When life begins to speculate upon itself, I suspect it has begun to die. And seldom has there been a fitter soul, one cleaner from evil, from folly, from human device—a purer cistern for such water of life as rose in the heart of Janet Grant to pour itself into, than the soul of Sir Gibbie. But I must not call any true soul a cistern: wherever the water of life is received, it sinks and softens and hollows, until it reaches,

far down, the springs of life there also, that come straight from the eternal hills, and thenceforth there is in that soul a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

CHAPTER II.

THE SLATE.

FROM that very next day, then, after he was received into the cottage on Glashgar, Gibbie, as a matter of course, took upon him the work his hand could find to do, and Janet averred to her husband that never had any of her daughters been more useful to her. At the same time, however, she insisted that Robert should take the boy out with him. She would not have him do woman's work, especially work for which she was herself perfectly able. She had not come to her years, she said, to learn idleset; and the boy would save Robert many a weary step among the hills.

"He canna speyk to the dog," objected Robert, giving utterance to the first difficulty that suggested itself.

"The dog canna speyk himsel'," returned Janet, "an' the won'er is he can un'erstan': wha kens but he may come full nigher ane 'at's speechless like himsel'! Ye gie the cratur the chance, an' I s' warran' he'll mak himsel' plain to the dog. Ye jist try 'im. Tell ye him to tell the dog sae and sae, an' see what 'll come o' 't."

Robert made the experiment, and it proved satisfactory. As soon as he had received Robert's orders, Gibbie 'claimed Oscar's attention. The dog looked up in his face, noted every glance and gesture, and, partly from sympathetic instinct, that gift lying so near the very essence of life, partly from observation of the state of affairs in respect of the sheep, divined with certainty what the duty required of him was, and was off like a shot.

"The twa dumb craturs un'erstan' ane anither better nor I un'erstan' aither o' them," said Robert to his wife when they came home.

And now indeed it was a blessed time for Gibbie. It had been pleasant down in the valley, with the cattle and Donal, and foul weather sometimes; but now it was the full

glow of summer; the sweet keen air of the mountain bathed him as he ran, entered into him, filled him with life like the new wine of the kingdom of God, and the whole world rose in its glory around him. Surely it is not the outspread sea, however the sight of its storms and its labouring ships may enhance the sense of safety to the onlooker, but the outspread land of peace and plenty, with its nestling houses, its well-stocked yards, its cattle feeding in the meadows, and its men and horses at labour in the fields, that gives the deepest delight to the heart of the poet! Gibbie was one of the meek, and inherited the earth. Throned on the mountain, he beheld the multiform "goings on of life," and in love possessed the whole. He was of the poet-kind also, and now that he was a shepherd, saw everything with shepherd-eyes. One moment, to his fancy, the great sun above played the shepherd to the world, the winds were the dogs, and the men and women the sheep. The next, in higher mood, he would remember the good shepherd of whom Janet had read to him, and pat the head of the collie that lay beside him: Oscar too was a shepherd

and no hireling; he fed the sheep; he turned them from danger and barrenness; and he barked well.

“I’m the dumb dog!” said Gibbie to himself, not knowing that he was really a copy in small of the good shepherd; “but maybe there may be mair nor ae gait o’ barkin’.”

Then what a joy it was to the heaven-born obedience of the child, to hearken to every word, watch every look, divine every wish of the old man! Child Hercules could not have waited on mighty old Saturn as Gibbie waited on Robert. For he was to him the embodiment of all that was reverend and worthy, a very gulf of wisdom, a mountain of rectitude. Gibbie was one of those few elect natures to whom obedience is a delight—a creature so different from the vulgar that they have but one tentacle they can reach such with—that of contempt.

“I jist lo’e the bairn as the verra aipple o’ my ee,” said Robert. “I can scarce consaive a wuss, but there’s the cratur wi’ a grip o’ ’t! He seems to ken what’s risin’ i’ my min’, an’ in a moment he’s up like the dog to be ready, an’ luiks at me waitin’.”

Nor was it long before the town-bred child grew to love the heavens almost as dearly as the earth. He would gaze and gaze at the clouds as they came and went, and watching them and the wind, weighing the heat and the cold, and marking many indications, known some of them perhaps only to himself, understood the signs of the earthly times at length nearly as well as an insect or a swallow, and far better than long-experienced old Robert. The mountain was Gibbie's very home; yet to see him far up on it, in the red glow of the setting sun, with his dog, as obedient as himself, hanging upon his every signal, one could have fancied him a shepherd boy come down from the plains of heaven to look after a lost lamb. Often, when the two old people were in bed and asleep, Gibbie would be out watching the moon rise—seated, still as ruined god of Egypt, on a stone of the mountain side, islanded in space, nothing alive and visible near him, perhaps not even a solitary night-wind blowing and ceasing like the breath of a man's life, and the awfully silent moon sliding up from the hollow of a valley below. If there be indeed

a one spirit, ever awake and aware, should it be hard to believe that that spirit should then hold common thought with a little spirit of its own? If the nightly mountain was the prayer-closet of him who said he would be with his disciples to the end of the world, can it be folly to think he would hold talk with such a child, alone under the heaven, in the presence of the father of both? Gibbie never thought about himself, therefore was there wide room for the entrance of the spirit. Does the questioning thought arise to any reader: How could a man be conscious of bliss without the thought of himself? I answer the doubt: When a man turns to look at himself, that moment the glow of the loftiest bliss begins to fade; the pulsing fire-flies throb paler in the passionate night; an unseen vapour steams up from the marsh and dims the star-crowded sky and the azure sea; and the next moment the very bliss itself looks as if it had never been more than a phosphorescent gleam—the summer lightning of the brain. For then the man sees himself but in his own dim mirror, whereas ere he turned to look in that, he knew himself in the absolute clarity of God's

present thought out-bodying him. The shoots of glad consciousness that come to the obedient man, surpass in bliss whole days and years of such ravined rapture as he gains whose weariness is ever spurring the sides of his intent towards the ever retreating goal of his desires. I am a traitor even to myself if I would live without my life.

But I withhold my pen; for vain were the fancy, by treatise or sermon or poem or tale, to persuade a man to forget himself. He cannot if he would. Sooner will he forget the presence of a raging tooth. There is no forgetting of ourselves but in the finding of our deeper, our true self—God's idea of us when he devised us—the Christ in us. Nothing but that self can displace the false, greedy, whining self, of which most of us are so fond and proud. And that self no man can find for himself; seeing of himself he does not even know what to search for. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God."

Then there was the delight, fresh every week, of the Saturday gathering of the brothers and sisters, whom Gibbie could hardly have loved

more, had they been of his own immediate kin. Dearest of all was Donal, whose greeting—"Weel, cratur," was heavenly in Gibbie's ears. Donal would have had him go down and spend a day, every now and then, with him and the *nawt*, as in old times—so soon the times grow old to the young!—but Janet would not hear of it, until the foolish tale of the brownie should have quite blown over.

"Eh, but I wuss," she added, as she said so, "I cud win at something aboot his fowk, or aiven whaur he cam frae, or what they ca'd him! Never ae word has the cratur spoken!"

"Ye sud learn him to read, mither," said Donal.

"Hoo wad I du that, laddie? I wad hae to learn him to speyk first," returned Janet.

"Lat him come doon to me, an' I'll try my han'," said Donal.

Janet, notwithstanding, persisted in her refusal—for the present. By Donal's words set thinking of the matter, however, she now pondered the question day after day, how she might teach him to read; and at last the idea dawned upon her to substitute writing for speech.

She took the Shorter Catechism, which, in those days, had always an alphabet as janitor to the gates of its mysteries—who, with the catechism as a consequence even dimly foreboded, would even have learned it?—and showed Gibbie the letters, naming each several times, and going over them repeatedly. Then she gave him Donal's school-slate, with a *sklet-pike*, and said, "Noo, mak a muckle A, cratur."

Gibbie did so, and well too: she found that already he knew about half the letters.

"*He* 's no fule!" she said to herself in triumph.

The other half soon followed; and she then began to show him words—not in the catechism, but in the New Testament. Having told him what any word was, and led him to consider the letters composing it, she would desire him to make it on the slate, and he would do so with tolerable accuracy: she was not very severe about the spelling, if only it was plain he knew the word. Ere long he began to devise short ways of making the letters, and soon wrote with remarkable facility in a character modified from the printed letters.

When at length Janet saw him take the book by himself, and sit pondering over it, she had not a doubt he was understanding it, and her heart leapt for joy. He had to ask her a good many words at first, and often the meaning of one and another ; but he seldom asked a question twice ; and as his understanding was far ahead of his reading, he was able to test a conjectured meaning by the sense or nonsense it made of the passage.

One day she turned him to the paraphrases.* At once, to his astonishment, he found there, all silent, yet still the same delight which Donal used to divide to him from the book of *ballants*. His joy was unbounded. He jumped from his seat ; he danced, and laughed, and finally stood upon one leg : no other mode of expression but this, the expression of utter failure to express, was of avail to the relief of his feeling.

One day, a few weeks after Gibbie had begun to read by himself, Janet became aware that he was sitting on his stool, in what had come to be called *the cratur's corner*, more than

* Metrical paraphrases of passages of Scripture, always to be found at the end of the bibles printed for Scotland.

usually absorbed in some attempt with slate and pencil—now ceasing, lost in thought, and now commencing anew. She went near and peeped over his shoulder. At the top of the slate he had written the word *give*, then the word *giving*, and below them, *gib*, then *gibing*; upon these followed *gib* again, and he was now plainly meditating something farther. Suddenly he seemed to find what he wanted, for in haste, almost as if he feared it might escape him, he added a *y*, making the word *giby*—then first lifted his head, and looked round, evidently seeking her. She laid her hand on his head. He jumped up with one of his most radiant smiles and holding out the slate to her, pointed with his pencil to the word he had just completed. She did not know it for a word, but sounded it as it seemed to stand, making the *g* soft, as I daresay some of my readers, not recognizing in *Gibbie* the diminutive of *Gilbert*, may have treated its more accurate form. He shook his head sharply, and laid the point of his pencil upon the *g* of the *give* written above. Janet had been his teacher too long not to see what he meant, and immediately pronounced

the word as he would have it. Upon this he began a wild dance, but sobering suddenly, sat down, and was instantly again absorbed in further attempt. It lasted so long that Janet resumed her previous household occupation. At length he rose, and with thoughtful, doubtful contemplation of what he had done, brought her the slate. There, under the fore-gone success, he had written the words *galatians* and *breath*, and under them, *galbreath*. She read them all, and at the last, which, witnessing to his success, she pronounced to his satisfaction, he began another dance, which again he ended abruptly, to draw her attention once more to the slate. He pointed to the *giby* first, and the *galbreath* next, and she read them together. This time he did not dance, but seemed waiting some result. Upon Janet the idea was dawning that he meant himself, but she was thrown out by the cognomen's correspondence with that of the laird, which suggested that the boy had been merely attempting the name of the great man of the district. With this in her mind, and doubtfully feeling her way, she essayed the tentative of setting him right in

the Christian name, and said: "*Thomas—Thomas Galbraith.*" Gibbie shook his head as before, and again resumed his seat. Presently he brought her the slate, with all the rest rubbed out, and these words standing alone—*sir giby galbreath.* Janet read them aloud, whereupon Gibbie began stabbing his forehead with the point of his slate-pencil, and dancing once more in triumph: he had, he hoped, for the first time in his life, conveyed a fact through words.

"That's what they ca' ye, is't?" said Janet, looking motherly at him: "—Sir Gibbie Galbraith?"

Gibbie nodded vehemently.

"It'll be some nickname the bairns hae gien him," said Janet to herself, but continued to gaze at him, in questioning doubt of her own solution. She could not recall having ever heard of a *Sir* in the family; but ghosts of things forgotten kept rising formless and thin in the sky of her memory: *had* she never heard of a Sir Somebody Galbraith somewhere? And still she stared at the child, trying to grasp what she could not even see. By this time

Gibbie was standing quite still, staring at her in return : he could not think what made her stare so at him.

“Wha ca’d ye that?” said Janet at length, pointing to the slate.

Gibbie took the slate, dropped upon his seat, and after considerable cogitation and effort, brought her the words, *gibyse fapher*. Janet for a moment was puzzled, but when she thought of correcting the *p* with a *t*, Gibbie entirely approved.

“What was yer father, cratur?” she asked.

Gibbie, after a longer pause, and more evident labour than hitherto, brought her the enigmatical word, *asootr*, which, the *Sir* running about in her head, quite defeated Janet. Perceiving his failure, he jumped upon a chair, and reaching after one of Robert’s Sunday shoes on the *crap o’ the wa’*, the natural shelf running all round the cottage, formed by the top of the wall where the rafters rested, caught hold of it, tumbled with it upon his creepie, took it between his knees, and began a pantomime of the making or mending of the same with such verisimilitude of imitation, that it was clear to

Janet he must have been familiar with the processes collectively called shoemaking; and therewith she recognized the word on the slate—a *sutor*. She smiled to herself at the association of name and trade, and concluded that the *Sir* at least was a nickname. And yet—and yet—whether from the presence of some rudiment of an old memory, or from something about the boy that belonged to a higher style than his present showing, her mind kept swaying in an uncertainty whose very object eluded her.

“What is ’t yer wull ’at we ca’ ye, than, cratur?” she asked, anxious to meet the child’s own idea of himself.

He pointed to the *giby*.

“Weel, Gibbie,” responded Janet,—and at the word, now for the first time addressed by her to himself, he began dancing more wildly than ever, and ended with standing motionless on one leg: now first and at last he was fully recognized for what he was!—“Weel, Gibbie, I s’ ca’ ye what ye think fit,” said Janet. “An’ noo gang yer wa’s, Gibbie, an’ see ’at Crummie’s no ower far oot o’ sicht.”

From that hour Gibbie had his name from the whole family—his Christian name only, however, Robert and Janet having agreed it would be wise to avoid whatever might possibly bring the boy again under the notice of the laird. The latter half of his name they laid aside for him, as parents do a dangerous or over-valuable gift to a child.

CHAPTER III.

RUMOURS.

ALMOST from the first moment of his being domiciled on Glashgar, what with the good food, the fine exercise, the exquisite air, and his great happiness, Gibbie began to grow ; and he took to growing so fast that his legs soon shot far out of his winsey garment. But, of all places, that was a small matter in Gorm-garnet, where the kilt was as common as trousers. His wiry limbs grew larger without losing their firmness or elasticity ; his chest, the effort in running up hill constantly alternated with the relief of running down, rapidly expanded, and his lungs grew hardy as well as powerful ; till he became at length such in wind and muscle, that he could run down a wayward sheep almost as well as Oscar. And

his nerve grew also with his body and strength, till his coolness and courage were splendid. Never, when the tide of his affairs ran most in the shallows, had Gibbie had much acquaintance with fears, but now he had forgotten the taste of them, and would have encountered a wild highland bull alone on the mountain, as readily as tie Crummie up in her byre.

One afternoon, Donal, having got a half holiday, by the help of a friend and the favour of Mistress Jean, came home to see his mother, and having greeted her, set out to find Gibbie. He had gone a long way, looking and calling without success, and had come in sight of a certain tiny loch, or tarn, that filled a hollow of the mountain. It was called the Deid Pot; and the old awe, amounting nearly to terror, with which in his childhood he had regarded it, returned upon him, the moment he saw the dark gleam of it, nearly as strong as ever—an awe indescribable, arising from mingled feelings of depth, and darkness, and lateral recesses, and unknown serpent-like fishes. The pot, though small in surface, was truly of unknown depth, and had elements of dread about it telling upon far less

active imaginations than Donal's. While he stood gazing at it, almost afraid to go nearer, a great splash that echoed from the steep rocks surrounding it, brought his heart into his mouth, and immediately followed a loud barking, in which he recognized the voice of Oscar. Before he had well begun to think what it could mean, Gibbie appeared on the opposite side of the loch, high above its level, on the top of the rocks forming its basin. He began instantly a rapid descent towards the water, where the rocks were so steep, and the footing so precarious, that Oscar wisely remained at the top, nor attempted to follow him. Presently the dog caught sight of Donal, where he stood on a lower level, whence the water was comparatively easy of access, and starting off at full speed, joined him, with much demonstration of welcome. But he received little notice from Donal, whose gaze was fixed, with much wonder and more fear, on the descending Gibbie. Some twenty feet from the surface of the loch, he reached a point whence clearly, in Donal's judgment, there was no possibility of farther descent. But Donal was never more mistaken;

for that instant Gibbie flashed from the face of the rock head foremost, like a fishing bird into the lake. Donal gave a cry, and ran to the edge of the water, accompanied by Oscar, who, all the time, had showed no anxiety, but had stood wagging his tail, and uttering now and then a little half-disappointed whine; neither now were his motions as he ran other than those of frolic and expectancy. When they reached the loch, there was Gibbie already but a few yards from the only possible landing-place, swimming with one hand, while in the other arm he held a baby lamb, its head lying quite still on his shoulder: it had been stunned by the fall, but might come round again. Then first Donal began to perceive that *the cratur* was growing an athlete. When he landed, he gave Donal a merry laugh of welcome, but without stopping flew up the hill to take the lamb to its mother. Fresh from the icy water, he ran so fast that it was all Donal could do to keep up with him.

The Deid Pot, then, taught Gibbie what swimming it could, which was not much, and what diving it could, which was more; but the

nights of the following summer, when everybody on mountain and valley was asleep, and the moon shone, he would often go down to the Daur, and throwing himself into its deepest reaches, spend hours in lonely sport with water and wind and moon. He had by that time learned things knowing which a man can never be lonesome.

The few goats on the mountain were for a time very inimical to him. So often did they butt him over, causing him sometimes severe bruises, that at last he resolved to try conclusions with them; and when next a goat made a rush at him, he seized him by the horns and wrestled with him mightily. This exercise, once begun, he provoked engagements, until his strength and aptitude were such and so well known, that not a billy-goat on Glashgar would have to do with him. But when he saw that every one of them ran at his approach, Gibbie, who could not bear to be in discord with any creature, changed his behaviour towards them, and took equal pains to reconcile them to him—nor rested before he had entirely succeeded.

Every time Donal came home, he would

bring some book of verse with him, and, leading Gibbie to some hollow, shady or sheltered as the time required, would there read to him ballads, or songs, or verse more stately, as mood or provision might suggest. The music, the melody and the cadence and the harmony, the tone and the rhythm and the time and the rime, instead of growing common to him, rejoiced Gibbie more and more every feast, and with ever growing reverence he looked up to Donal as a mighty master-magician. But if Donal could have looked down into Gibbie's bosom, he would have seen something there beyond his comprehension. For Gibbie was already in the kingdom of heaven, and Donal would have to suffer, before he would begin even to look about for the door by which a man may enter into it.

I wonder how much Gibbie was indebted to his constrained silence during all these years. That he lost by it, no one will doubt; that he gained also, a few will admit: though I should find it hard to say what and how great, I cannot doubt it bore an important part in the fostering of such thoughts and feelings and actions as were beyond the vision of Donal, poet as he

was growing to be. While Donal read, rejoicing in the music both of sound and sense, Gibbie was doing something besides : he was listening with the same ears, and trying to see with the same eyes which he brought to bear upon the things Janet taught him out of the book. Already those first weekly issues, lately commenced, of a popular literature had penetrated into the mountains of Gormgarnet ; but whether Donal read Blind Harry from a thumbled old modern edition, or some new tale or neat poem from the Edinburgh press, Gibbie was always placing what he heard by the side, as it were, of what he knew ; asking himself, in this case and that, what Jesus Christ would have done, or what he would require of a disciple. There must be one right way, he argued. Sometimes his innocence failed to see that no disciple of the Son of Man could, save by fearful failure, be in such circumstances as the tale or ballad represented. But whether successful or not in the individual inquiry, the boy's mind and heart and spirit, in this silent, unembarrassed brooding, as energetic as it was peaceful, expanded upwards when it failed to widen, and the widen-

ing would come after. Gifted, from the first of his being, with such a rare drawing to his kind, he saw his utmost affection dwarfed by the words and deeds of Jesus—beheld more and more grand the requirements made of a man who would love his fellows as Christ loved them. When he sank foiled from any endeavour to understand how a man was to behave in certain circumstances, these or those, he always took refuge in *doing* something—and doing it better than before; leaped the more eagerly if Robert called him, spoke the more gently to Oscar, turned the sheep more careful not to scare them—as if by instinct he perceived that the only hope of understanding lies in doing. He would cleave to the skirt when the hand seemed withdrawn; he would run to do the thing he had learned yesterday, when as yet he could find no answer to the question of to-day. Thus, as the weeks of solitude and love and thought and obedience glided by, the reality of Christ grew upon him, till he saw the very rocks and heather and the faces of the sheep like him, and felt his presence everywhere, and ever coming nearer. Nor did his imagination aid only a

little in the growth of his being. He would dream waking dreams about Jesus, gloriously childlike. He fancied he came down every now and then to see how things were going in the lower part of his kingdom; and that when he did so, he made use of Glashgar and its rocks for his stair, coming down its granite scale in the morning, and again, when he had ended his visit, going up in the evening by the same steps. Then high and fast would his heart beat at the thought that some day he might come upon his path just when he had passed, see the heather lifting its head from the trail of his garment, or more slowly out of the prints left by his feet, as he walked up the stairs of heaven, going back to his father. Sometimes, when a sheep stopped feeding and looked up suddenly, he would fancy that Jesus had laid his hand on its head, and was now telling it that it must not mind being killed; for he had been killed, and it was all right.

Although he could read the New Testament for himself now, he always preferred making acquaintance with any new portion of it first

from the mouth of Janet. Her voice made the word more of a word to him. But the next time he read, it was sure to be what she had then read. She was his priestess ; the opening of her bible was the opening of a window in heaven ; her cottage was the porter's lodge to the temple ; his very sheep were feeding on the temple-stairs. Smile at such fancies if you will, but think also whether they may not be within sight of the greatest of facts. Of all teachings that which presents a far distant God is the nearest to absurdity. Either there is none, or he is nearer to every one of us than our nearest consciousness of self. An unapproachable divinity is the veriest of monsters, the most horrible of human imaginations.

When the winter came, with its frost and snow, Gibbie saved Robert much suffering. At first Robert was unwilling to let him go out alone in stormy weather ; but Janet believed that the child doing the old man's work would be specially protected. All through the hard time, therefore, Gibbie went and came, and no evil befell him. Neither did he suffer from the cold ; for, a sheep having died towards the end

of the first autumn, Robert, in view of Gibbie's coming necessity, had begged of his master the skin, and dressed it with the wool upon it ; and of this, between the three of them, they made a coat for him ; so that he roamed the hill like a savage, in a garment of skin.

It became, of course, before very long, well known about the country that Mr. Duff's crofters upon Glashgar had taken in and were bringing up a foundling—some said an innocent, some said a wild boy—who helped Robert with his sheep, and Janet with her cow, but could not speak a word of either Gaelic or English. By and by, strange stories came to be told of his exploits, representing him as gifted with bodily powers as much surpassing the common, as his mental faculties were assumed to be under the ordinary standard. The rumour concerning him swelled as well as spread, mainly from the love of the marvellous common in the region, I suppose, until, towards the end of his second year on Glashgar, the notion of Gibbie in the imaginations of the children of Daurside, was that of an almost supernatural being, who had dwelt upon, or

rather who had haunted Glashgar from time immemorial, and of whom they had been hearing all their lives; and, although they had never heard anything bad of him—that he was *wild*, that he wore a hairy skin, that he could do more than any other boy dared attempt, that he was dumb, and that yet (for this also was said) sheep and dogs and cattle, and even the wild creatures of the mountain, could understand him perfectly—these statements were more than enough, acting on the suspicion and fear belonging to the savage in their own bosoms, to envelope the idea of him in a mist of dread, deepening to such horror in the case of the more timid and imaginative of them, that when the twilight began to gather about the cottages and farmhouses, the very mention of “the beast-loon o’ Glashgar” was enough, and that for miles up and down the river, to send many of the children scouring like startled hares into the house. Gibbie, in his atmosphere of human grace and tenderness, little thought what clouds of foolish fancies, rising from the valleys below, had, by their distorting vapours, made of him an object of terror to those whom

at the very first sight he would have loved and served. Amongst these, perhaps the most afraid of him were the children of the gamekeeper, for they lived on the very foot of the haunted hill, near the bridge and gate of Glashruach; and the laird himself happened one day to be witness of their fear. He inquired the cause, and yet again was his enlightened soul vexed by the persistency with which the shadows of superstition still hung about his lands. Had he been half as philosophical as he fancied himself, he might have seen that there was not necessarily a single film of superstition involved in the belief that a savage roamed a mountain—which was all that Mistress MacPholp, depriving the rumour of its richer colouring, ventured to impart as the cause of her children's perturbation; but anything a hair's-breadth out of the common, was a thing hated of Thomas Galbraith's soul, and whatever another believed which he did not choose to believe, he set down at once as superstition. He held therefore immediate communication with his gamekeeper on the subject, who in his turn was scandalized that *his* children should have thus

proved themselves unworthy of the privileges of their position, and given annoyance to the liberal soul of their master, and took care that both they and his wife should suffer in consequence. The expression of the man's face as he listened to the laird's complaint, would not have been a pleasant sight to any lover of Gibbie; but it had not occurred either to master or man that the offensive being whose doubtful existence caused the scandal, was the same towards whom they had once been guilty of such brutality; nor would their knowledge of the fact have been favourable to Gibbie. The same afternoon, the laird questioned his tenant of the Mains concerning his cottars; and was assured that better or more respectable people were not in all the region of Gormgarnet.

When Robert became aware, chiefly through the representations of his wife and Donal, of Gibbie's gifts of other kinds than those revealed to himself by his good shepherding, he began to turn it over in his mind, and by and by referred the question to his wife whether they ought not to send the boy to school, that he might learn the things he was so much more than ordinarily

capable of learning. Janet would give no immediate opinion. She must think, she said; and she took three days to turn the matter over in her mind. Her questioning cogitation was to this effect: "What need has a man to know anything but what the New Testament teaches him? Life was little to me before I began to understand its good news; now it is more than good—it is grand. But then, man is to live by *every* word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God; and everything came out of his mouth, when he said, Let there be this, and Let there be that. Whatever is true is his making, and the more we know of it the better. Besides, how much less of the New Testament would I understand now, if it were not for things I had gone through and learned before!"

"Ay, Robert," she answered, without preface, the third day, "I'm thinkin' there's a heap o' things, gien I hed them, 'at wad help me to ken what the Maister spak till. It wad be a sin no to lat the laddie learn. But wha'll tak the tribble needfu' to the learnin' o' a puir dummie?"

"Lat him gang doon to the Mains, an' herd wi' Donal," answered Robert. "He kens a

hantle mair nor you or me or Gibbie aither; an' whan he's learnt a' 'at Donal can shaw him, it'll be time to think what neist."

"Weel," answered Janet, "nane can say but that's sense, Robert; an' though I'm laith, for your sake mair nor my ain, to lat the laddie gang, lat him gang to Donal. I houp, atween the twa, they winna lat the nowt amo' the corn."

"The corn's 'maist cuttit noo," replied Robert; "an' for the maitter o' that, twa guid consciences winna blaw ane anither oot.—But he needna gang ilka day. He can gie ae day to the learnin', an' the neist to thinkin' about it amo' the sheep. An' ony day 'at ye want to keep him, ye can keep him; for it winna be as gien he gaed to the schuil."

Gibbie was delighted with the proposal.

"Only," said Robert, in final warning, "dinna ye lat them tak ye, Gibbie, an' score yer back again, my cratur; an' dinna ye answer naebody, whan they speir what ye're ca'd, onything mair nor jist *Gibbie*."

The boy laughed and nodded, and, as Janet said, the bairn's nick was as guid 's the best man's word.

Now came a happy time for the two boys. Donal began at once to teach Gibbie Euclid and arithmetic. When they had had enough of that for a day, he read Scottish history to him; and when they had done what seemed their duty by that, then came the best of the feast—whatever tales or poetry Donal had laid his hands upon.

Somewhere about this time it was that he first got hold of a copy of the *Paradise Lost*. He found that he could not make much of it. But he found also that, as before with the ballads, when he read from it aloud to Gibbie, his mere listening presence sent back a spiritual echo that helped him to the meaning; and when neither of them understood it, the grand organ roll of it, losing nothing in the Scotch vowing, delighted them both.

Once they were startled by seeing the game-keeper enter the field. The moment he saw him, Gibbie laid himself flat on the ground, but ready to spring to his feet and run. The man, however, did not come near them.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GAMEKEEPER.

THE second winter came, and with the first frost Gibbie resumed his sheepskin coat and the brogues and leggings which he had made for himself of deer-hide tanned with the hair. It pleased the two old people to see him so warmly clad. It pleased them also that, thus dressed, he always reminded them of some sacred personage undetermined—Jacob, or John the Baptist, or the man who went to meet the lion and be killed by him—in Robert's big bible, that is, in one or other of the woodcuts of the same. Very soon the stories about him were all stirred up afresh, and new rumours added. This one and that of the children declared they had caught sight of the beast-loon, running about the rocks like a goat; and one day a boy

of Angus's own, who had been a good way up the mountain, came home nearly dead with terror, saying the beast-loon had chased him a long way. He did not add that he had been throwing stones at the sheep, not perceiving any one in charge of them. So, one fine morning in December, having nothing particular to attend to, Angus shouldered his double-barrelled gun, and set out for a walk over Glashgar, in the hope of coming upon the savage that terrified the children. He must be off. That was settled. Where Angus was in authority, the outlandish was not to be suffered. The sun shone bright, and a keen wind was blowing.

About noon he came in sight of a few sheep, in a sheltered spot, where were little patches of coarse grass among the heather. On a stone, a few yards above them, sat Gibbie, not reading, as he would be half the time now, but busied with a Pan's-pipes—which, under Donal's direction, he had made for himself—drawing from them experimental sounds, and feeling after the possibility of a melody. He was so much occupied that he did not see Angus approach, who now stood for a moment or two regarding him.

He was hirsute as Esau, his head crowned with its own plentiful crop—even in winter he wore no cap—his body covered with the wool of the sheep, and his legs and feet with the hide of the deer—the hair, as in nature, outward. The deer-skin Angus knew for what it was from afar, and concluding it the spoil of the only crime of which he recognized the enormity, whereas it was in truth part of a skin he had himself sold to a saddler in the next village, to make sporrans of, boiled over with wrath, and strode nearer, grinding his teeth. Gibbie looked up, knew him, and starting to his feet, turned to the hill. Angus, levelling his gun, shouted to him to stop, but Gibbie only ran the harder, nor once looked round. Idiotic with rage, Angus fired. One of his barrels was loaded with shot, the other with ball: meaning to use the shot barrel, he pulled the wrong trigger, and liberated the bullet. It went through the calf of Gibbie's right leg, and he fell. It had, however, passed between two muscles without injuring either greatly, and had severed no artery. The next moment he was on his feet again and running, nor did he

yet feel pain. Happily he was not very far from home, and he made for it as fast as he could—preceded by Oscar, who, having once by accident been shot himself, had a mortal terror of guns. Maimed as Gibbie was, he could yet run a good deal faster up hill than the rascal who followed him. But long before he reached the cottage, the pain had arrived, and the nearer he got to it, the worse it grew. In spite of the anguish, however, he held on with determination : to be seized by Angus and dragged down to Glashruach, would be far worse.

Robert Grant was at home that day, suffering from rheumatism. He was seated in the *ingle-neuk*, with his pipe in his mouth, and Janet was just taking the potatoes for their dinner off the fire, when the door flew open, and in stumbled Gibbie, and fell on the floor. The old man threw his pipe from him, and rose trembling, but Janet was before him. She dropt down on her knees beside the boy, and put her arm under his head. He was white and motionless.

“Eh, Robert Grant!” she cried, “he’s bleedin’.”

The same moment they heard quick yet

heavy steps approaching. At once Robert divined the truth, and a great wrath banished rheumatism and age together. Like a boy he sprang to the *crap o' the wa'*, whence his yet powerful hand came back armed with a huge rusty old broad-sword that had seen service in its day. Two or three fierce tugs at the hilt proving the blade immovable in the sheath, and the steps being now almost at the door, he clubbed the weapon, grasping it by the sheathed blade, and holding it with the edge downward, so that the blow he meant to deal should fall from the round of the basket hilt. As he heaved it aloft, the gray old shepherd seemed inspired by the god of battles; the rage of a hundred ancestors was welling up in his peaceful breast. His red eye flashed, and the few hairs that were left him stood erect on his head like the mane of a roused lion. Ere Angus had his second foot over the threshold, down came the helmet-like hilt with a dull crash on his head, and he staggered against the wall.

“Tak ye that, Angus Mac Pholp!” panted Robert through his clenched teeth, following the blow with another from his fist, that pros-

trated the enemy. Again he heaved his weapon, and standing over him where he lay, more than half-stunned, said in a hoarse voice,

“By the great God my maker, Angus Mac Pholp, gien ye seek to rise, I’ll come doon on ye again as ye lie!—Here, Oscar!—He’s no ane to haud ony fair play wi’, mair nor a brute beast.—Watch him, Oscar, and tak him by the thro’t gien he muv a finger.”

The gun had dropped from Angus’s hand, and Robert, keeping his eye on him, secured it.

“She’s lodd,” muttered Angus.

“Lie still than,” returned Robert, pointing the weapon at his head.

“It’ll be murder,” said Angus, and made a movement to lay hold of the barrel.

“Haud him doon, Oscar,” cried Robert. The dog’s paws were instantly on his chest, and his teeth grinning within an inch of his face. Angus vowed in his heart he would kill the beast on the first chance. “It wad be but blude for blude, Angus Mac Pholp,” he went on. “Yer hoor’s come, my man. That bairn’s is no the first blude o’ man ye hae shed, an’ it’s

time the scripture was fulfillt, an' the han' o' man shed yours."

"Ye're no gauin to kill me, Rob Grant?" growled the fellow in growing fright.

"I'm gauin to see whether the shirra winna be perswaudit to hang ye," answered the shepherd. "This maun be putten a stap till.—Quaiet ! or I'll brain ye, an' save him the trouble.—Here, Janet, fess yer pot o' pitawtas. I'm gauin to toom the man's gun. Gien he daur to muv, jist gie him the haill bilin,' bree an a', i' the ill face o'm ; gien ye lat him up he'll kill's a' ; only tak care an' haud aff o' the dog, puir fallow !—I wad lay the stock o' yer murderin' gun i' the fire gien 'twarna 'at I reckon it's the laird's an' no yours. Ye're no fit to be trustit wi' a gun. Ye're waur nor a weyver."

So saying he carried the weapon to the door, and, in terror lest he might, through wrath or the pressure of dire necessity, use it against his foe, emptied its second barrel into the earth, and leaned it up against the wall outside.

Janet obeyed her husband so far as to stand over Angus with the potato-pot : how far she would have carried her obedience had he at-

tempted to rise, may remain a question. Doubtless a brave man doing his duty would have scorned to yield himself thus ; but right and wrong had met face to face, and the wrong had a righteous traitor in his citadel.

When Robert returned and relieved her guard, Janet went back to Gibbie, whom she had drawn towards the fire. He lay almost insensible, but in vain Janet attempted to get a teaspoonful of whisky between his lips. For as he grew older, his horror of it increased ; and now, even when he was faint and but half conscious, his physical nature seemed to recoil from contact with it. It was with signs of disgust, rubbing his mouth with the back of each hand alternately, that he first showed returning vitality. In a minute or two more he was able to crawl to his bed in the corner, and then Janet proceeded to examine his wound.

By this time his leg was much swollen, but the wound had almost stopped bleeding, and it was plain there was no bullet in it, for there were the two orifices. She washed it carefully and bound it up. Then Gibbie raised his head and looked somewhat anxiously round the room.

“Ye’re luikin’ efter Angus?” said Janet; “he’s yon’er upo’ the flure, a twa yairds frae ye. Dinna be fleyt; yer father an’ Oscar has him safe eneuch, I s’ warran’.”

“Here, Janet!” cried her husband; “gien ye be throu’ wi’ the bairn, I maun be gauin’.”

“Hoot, Robert! ye’re no surely gauin’ to lea’ me an’ puir Gibbie, ’at maunna stir, i’ the hoose oor lanes wi’ the murderin’ man!” returned Janet.

“’Deed am I, lass! Jist rin and fess the bit tow ’at ye hing yer duds upo’ at the washin’, an’ we’ll bin’ the feet an’ the han’s o’ ’im.”

Janet obeyed and went. Angus, who had been quiet enough for the last ten minutes, meditating and watching, began to swear furiously, but Robert paid no more heed than if he had not heard him—stood calm and grim at his head, with the clubbed sword heaved over his shoulder. When she came back, by her husband’s directions, she passed the rope repeatedly round the keeper’s ankles, then several times between them, drawing the bouts tightly together, so that, instead of the two sharing one ring, each ankle had now, as it were, a

close-fitting one for itself. Again and again, as she tied it, did Angus meditate a sudden spring, but the determined look of Robert, and his feeling memory of the blows he had so unsparingly delivered upon him, as well as the weakening effect of that he had received on his head, caused him to hesitate until it was altogether too late. When they began to bind his hands, however, he turned desperate, and struck at both, cursing and raging.

“Gien ye binna quaiet, ye s’ taste the dog’s teeth,” said Robert.—Angus reflected that he would have a better chance when he was left alone with Janet, and yielded.—“Troth!” Robert went on, as he continued his task, “I hae no pity left for ye, Angus Mac Pholp; an’ gien ye tyauve ony mair, I’ll lat at ye. I wad care no more to caw oot yer harns nor I wad to kill a tod (*fox*). To be hangt for’t, I wad be but prood. It’s a fine thing to be hangt for a guid cause, but ye’ll be hangt for an ill ane.—Noo, Janet, fess a bun’le o’ brackens frae the byre, an’ lay aneth’s heid. We maunna be sairer upo’ him, nor the needcessity laid upo’ hiz. I s’ jist trail him aff o’ the door, an’ a bit

on to the fire, for he'll be cauld whan he's quaitet doon, an' syne I'll awa' an' get word o' the shirra'. Scotlan's come till a pretty pass, whan they shot men wi' guns, as gien they war wull cratur's to be peelt an' aiten. Care what set him! He may weel be a keeper o' ghem, for he's as ill a keeper o' 's brither as auld Cain himsel'. But," he concluded, tying the last knot hard, "we'll e'en dee what we can to keep the keeper."

It was seldom Robert spoke at such length, but the provocation, the wrath, the conflict, and the victory, had sent the blood rushing through his brain, and loosed his tongue like strong drink.

"Ye'll tak yer denner afore ye gang, Robert," said his wife.

"Na, I can ait naething; I'll tak a bannock i' my pooch. Ye can gie my denner to Angus: he'll want hertenin' for the wuddie (*gallows*)."

So saying he put the bannock in his pocket, flung his broad blue bonnet upon his head, took his stick, and ordering Oscar to remain at home and watch the prisoner, set out for a walk of five miles, as if he had never known such a

thing as rheumatism. He must find another magistrate than the laird; he would not trust him where his own gamekeeper, Angus Mac Pholp, was concerned.

“Keep yer ee upon him, Janet,” he said, turning in the doorway. “Dinna lowse sicht o’ him afore I come back wi’ the constable. Dinna lippen. I s’ be back in three hoors like.”

With these words he turned finally, and disappeared.

The mortification of Angus as he lay thus trapped in the den of the beast-loon, at being taken and bound by an old man, a woman, and a colley dog, was extreme. He went over the whole affair again and again in his mind, ever with a fresh burst of fury. It was in vain he excused himself on the ground that the attack had been so sudden and treacherous, and the precautions taken so complete. He had proved himself an ass, and the whole country would ring with mockery of him! He had sense enough, too, to know that he was in a serious as well as ludicrous predicament: he had scarcely courage enough to contemplate the possible result. If he could but get his hands

free, it would be easy to kill Oscar and disable Janet. For the idiot, he counted him nothing. He had better wait, however, until there should be no boiling liquid ready to her hand.

Janet set out the dinner, peeled some potatoes, and approaching Angus, would have fed him. In place of accepting her ministrations, he fell to abusing her with the worst language he could find. She withdrew without a word, and sat down to her own dinner; but, finding the torrent of vituperation kept flowing, rose again, and going to the door, fetched a great jug of cold water from the pail that always stood there, and coming behind her prisoner, emptied it over his face. He gave a horrid yell, taking the douche for a boiling one.

“Ye needna cry oot like that at guid cauld watter,” said Janet. “But ye’ll jist absteen frae ony mair sic words i’ my hearin’, or ye s’ get the like ilka time ye brak oot.” As she spoke, she knelt, and wiped his face and head with her apron.

A fresh oath rushed to Angus’s lips, but the fear of a second jugful made him suppress it, and Janet sat down again to her dinner. She

could scarcely eat a mouthful, however, for pity of the rascal beside her, at whom she kept looking wistfully without daring again to offer him anything.

While she sat thus, she caught a swift investigating look he cast on the cords that bound his hands, and then at the fire. She perceived at once what was passing in his mind. Rising, she went quickly to the byre, and returned immediately with a chain they used for tethering the cow. The end of it she slipped deftly round his neck, and made it fast, putting the little bar through a link.

“Ir ye gauin’ to hang me, ye she-deevil?” he cried, making a futile attempt to grasp the chain with his bound hands.

“Ye’ll be wantin’ a drappy mair cauld watter, I’m thinkin’,” said Janet.

She stretched the chain to its length, and with a great stone drove the sharp iron stake at the other end of it, into the clay-floor. Fearing next that, bound as his hands were, he might get a hold of the chain and drag out the stake, or might even contrive to remove the rope from his feet with them, or that he might

indeed with his teeth undo the knot that confined his hands themselves—she got a piece of rope, and made a loop at the end of it, then watching her opportunity passed the loop between his hands, noosed the other end through it, and drew the noose tight. The free end of the rope she put through the staple that received the bolt of the cottage-door, and gradually, as he grew weary in pulling against her, tightened the rope until she had his arms at their stretch beyond his head. Not quite satisfied yet, she lastly contrived, in part by setting Oscar to occupy his attention, to do the same with his feet, securing them to a heavy chest in the corner opposite the door, upon which chest she heaped a pile of stones. If it pleased the Lord to deliver them from this man, she would have her honest part in the salvation! And now at last she believed she had him safe.

Gibbie had fallen asleep, but he now woke and she gave him his dinner; then *redd up*, and took her bible. Gibbie had lain down again, and she thought he was asleep.

Angus grew more and more uncomfortable, both in body and in mind. He knew he was

hated throughout the country, and had hitherto rather enjoyed the knowledge; but now he judged that the popular feeling, by no means a mere prejudice, would tell against him committed for trial. He knew also that the magistrate to whom Robert had betaken himself, was not over friendly with his master, and certainly would not listen to any intercession from him. At length, what with pain, hunger, and fear, his pride began to yield, and, after an hour had passed in utter silence, he condescended to parley.

"Janet Grant," he said, "lat me gang, an' I'll trouble you or yours no more."

"Wadna ye think me some fule to hearken till ye?" suggested Janet.

"I'll sweir ony lawfu' aith 'at ye like to lay upo' me," protested Angus, "'at I'll dee whatever ye please to require o' me."

"I dinna doobt ye wad sweir; but what neist?" said Janet.

"What neist but ye'll lowse my han's?" rejoined Angus.

"It's no mainner o' use mentionin' 't," replied Janet; "for, as ye ken, I'm un'er authority, an'

yersel' h'ard my man tell me to tak unco percaution no to lat ye gang; for verily, Angus, ye hae conduckit yersel' this day more like ane possessed wi' a legion, than the douce faimily man 'at ye're supposit by the laird, yer maister, to be."

"Was ever man," protested Angus, "made sic a fule o', an' sae misguidit, by a pair o' auld cottars like you an' Robert Grant!"

"Wi' the help o' the Lord, by means o' the dog," supplemented Janet. "I wuss frae my hert I hed the great reid draigon i' yer place, an' I wad watch him bonny, I can tell ye, Angus MacPholp. I wadna be clear aboot giein *him* his denner, Angus."

"Let me gang, wuman, wi' yer reid draigons! I'll hairm naeboddy. The puir idiot's no muckle the waur, an' I'll tak mair tent whan I fire anither time."

"Wiser fowk nor me maun see to that," answered Janet.

"Hoots, wuman! it was naething but an accident."

"I kenna; but it'll be seen what Gibbie says."

"Awva! his word's guid for naething."

"For a penny, or a thoosan' poun'."

"My wife 'll be oot o' her wuts," pleaded Angus.

"Wad ye like a drink o' milk?" asked Janet, rising.

"I wad that," he answered.

She filled her little teapot with milk, and he drank it from the spout, hoping she was on the point of giving way.

"Noo," she said, when he had finished his draught, "ye maun jist mak the best o' it, Angus. Ony gait, it's a guid lesson in patience to ye, an' that ye haena had ower aften, I'm thinkin'.—Robert'll be here er lang."

With these words she set down the teapot, and went out: it was time to milk her cow.

In a little while Gibbie rose, tried to walk, but failed, and getting down on his hands and knees, crawled out after her. Angus caught a glimpse of his face as he crept past him, and then first recognized the boy he had lashed. Not compunction, but an occasional pang of dread lest he should have been the cause of his death, and might come upon his body in one of his walks, had served so to fix his face in his

memory, that, now he had a near view of him, pale with suffering and loss of blood and therefore more like his former self, he knew him beyond a doubt. With a great shoot of terror he concluded that the idiot had been lying there silently gloating over his revenge, waiting only till Janet should be out of sight, and was now gone after some instrument wherewith to take it. He pulled and tugged at his bonds, but only to find escape absolutely hopeless. In gathering horror, he lay moveless at last, but strained his hearing towards every sound.

Not only did Janet often pray with Gibbie, but sometimes as she read, her heart would grow so full, her soul be so pervaded with the conviction, perhaps the consciousness, of the presence of the man who had said he would be always with his friends, that, sitting there on her stool, she would begin talking to him out of the very depth of her life, just as if she saw him in Robert's chair in the ingle-neuk, at home in her cottage as in the house where Mary sat at his feet and heard his word. Then would Gibbie listen indeed, awed by very gladness. He never doubted that Jesus was there, or that

Janet saw him all the time although he could not.

This custom of praying aloud, she had grown into so long before Gibbie came to her, and he was so much and such a child, that his presence was no check upon the habit. It came in part from the intense reality of her belief, and was in part a willed fostering of its intensity. She never imagined that words were necessary ; she believed that God knew her every thought, and that the moment she lifted up her heart, it entered into communion with him ; but the very sound of the words she spoke seemed to make her feel nearer to the man who, being the eternal Son of the Father, yet had ears to hear and lips to speak, like herself. To talk to him aloud, also kept her thoughts together, helped her to feel the fact of the things she contemplated, as well as the reality of his presence.

Now the byre was just on the other side of the turf wall against which was the head of Gibbie's bed, and through the wall Gibbie had heard her voice, with that something in the tone of it which let him understand she was not talking to Crummie, but to Crummie's

maker; and it was therefore he had got up and gone after her. For there was no reason, so far as he knew or imagined, why he should not hear, as so many times before, what she was saying to the Master. He supposed that as she could not well speak to him in the presence of a man like Angus, she had gone out to the byre to have her talk with him there. He crawled to the end of the cottage so silently that she heard no sound of his approach. He would not go into the byre, for that might disturb her, for she would have to look up to know that it was only Gibbie; he would listen at the door. He found it wide open, and peeping in, saw Crummie chewing away, and Janet on her knees with her forehead leaning against the cow and her hands thrown up over her shoulder. She spoke in such a voice of troubled entreaty as he had never heard from her before, but which yet woke a strange vibration of memory in his deepest heart.—Yes, it was his father's voice it reminded him of! So had he cried in prayer the last time he ever heard him speak. What she said was nearly this:

“O Lord, gin ye wad but say what ye wad

hae deen ! Whan a body disna ken yer wull, she's jist driven to distraction. Thoo knows, my Maister, as weel's I can tell ye, 'at gien ye said till me, 'That man's gauin' to cut yer thro't : tak the tows frae him, an' lat him up,' I wad rin to dee't. It's no revenge, Lord ; it's jist 'at I dinna ken. The man's dune me no ill, 'cep' as he's sair hurtit yer bonnie Gibbie. It's Gibbie 'at has to forgie 'im an' syne me. But my man tellt me no to lat him up, an' hoo am I to be a wife sic as ye wad hae, O Lord, gien I dinna dee as my man tellt me ! It wad ill befit me to lat my auld Robert gang sae far wantin' his denner, a' for naething. What wad he think whan he cam hame ! Of coorse, Lord, gien ye tellt me, that wad mak a' the differ, for ye're Robert's maister as weel's mine, an' your wull wad saitisfee him jist as weel's me. I wad fain lat him gang, puir chiel ! but I daurna. Lord, convert him to the trowth. Lord, lat him ken what hate is.—But eh, Lord ! I wuss ye wad tell me what to du. Thy wull's the beginnin' an' mids an' en' o' a' thing to me. I'm wullin' eneuch to lat him gang, but he's Robert's pris'ner an' Gibbie's enemy ; he's no *my*

pris'ner an' no my enemy, an' I dinna think I hae the richt. An' wha kens but he micht gang shottin' mair fowk yet, 'cause I loot him gang! —But he canna shot a hare wantin' thy wull, O Jesus, the saviour o' man an' beast; an' ill wad I like to hae a han' i' the hangin' o' 'm. He may deserve 't, Lord, I dinna ken; but I'm thinkin' ye made him no sae weel tempered—as my Robert, for enstance.”

Here her voice ceased, and she fell a moaning.

Her trouble was echoed in dim pain from Gibbie's soul. That the prophetess who knew everything, the priestess who was at home in the very treasure-house of the great king, should be thus abandoned to dire perplexity, was a dreadful, a bewildering fact. But now first he understood the real state of the affair in the purport of the old man's absence; also how he was himself potently concerned in the business: if the offence had been committed against Gibbie, then with Gibbie lay the power, therefore the duty of forgiveness. But verily Gibbie's merit and his grace were in inverse ratio. Few things were easier to him than to love his enemies, and his merit in obeying the commandment was

small indeed. No enemy had as yet done him, in his immediate person, the wrong he could even imagine it hard to forgive. No sooner had Janet ceased than he was on his way back to the cottage: on its floor lay one who had to be waited upon with forgiveness.

Wearied with futile struggles, Angus found himself compelled to abide his fate, and was lying quite still when Gibbie re-entered. The boy thought he was asleep, but on the contrary he was watching his every motion, full of dread. Gibbie went hopping upon one foot to the hole in the wall where Janet kept the only knife she had. It was not there. He glanced round, but could not see it. There was no time to lose. Robert's returning steps might be heard any moment, and poor Angus might be hanged—only for shooting Gibbie! He hopped up to him and examined the knots that tied his hands: they were drawn so tight—in great measure by his own struggles—and so difficult to reach from their position, that he saw it would take him a long time to undo them. Angus thought, with fresh horror, he was examining them to make sure they would hold,

and was so absorbed in watching his movements that he even forgot to curse, which was the only thing left him. Gibbie looked round again for a moment, as if in doubt, then darted upon the tongs—there was no poker—and thrust them into the fire, caught up the asthmatic old bellows, and began to blow the peats. Angus saw the first action, heard the second, and a hideous dismay clutched his very heart: the savage fool was about to take his revenge in pinches with the red hot tongs! He looked for no mercy—perhaps felt that he deserved none. Manhood held him silent until he saw him take the implement of torture from the fire, glowing, not red but white hot, when he uttered such a terrific yell, that Gibbie dropped the tongs—happily not the hot ends—on his own bare foot, but caught them up again instantly, and made a great hop to Angus: if Janet had heard that yell and came in, all would be spoilt. But the faithless keeper began to struggle so fiercely, writhing with every contortion, and kicking with every inch, left possible to him, that Gibbie hardly dared attempt anything for dread of burning him, while

he sent yell after yell "as fast as mill-wheels strike." With a sudden thought Gibbie sprang to the door and locked it, so that Janet should not get in, and Angus, hearing the bolt, was the more convinced that his purpose was cruel, and struggled and yelled, with his eyes fixed on the glowing tongs, now fast cooling in Gibbie's hand. If instead of glowering at the tongs, he had but lent one steadfast regard to the face of the boy whom he took for a demoniacal idiot, he would have seen his supposed devil smile the sweetest of human, troubled, pitiful smiles. Even then, I suspect, however, his eye being evil, he would have beheld in the smile only the joy of malice in the near prospect of a glut of revenge.

In the meantime Janet in her perplexity, had, quite forgetful of the poor cow's necessities, abandoned Crummie, and wandered down the path as far as the shoulder her husband must cross ascending from the other side: thither, a great rock intervening, so little of Angus's cries reached, that she heard nothing through the deafness of her absorbing appeal for direction to her shepherd, the master of men.

Gibbie thrust the tongs again into the fire, and while blowing it, bethought him that it might give Angus confidence if he removed the chain from his neck. He laid down the bellows, and did so. But to Angus the action seemed only preparatory to taking him by the throat with the horrible implement. In his agony and wild endeavour to frustrate the supposed intent, he struggled harder than ever. But now Gibbie was undoing the rope fastened round the chest. This Angus did not perceive, and when it came suddenly loose in the midst of one of his fierce straining contortions, the result was that he threw his body right over his head, and lay on his face for a moment confused. Gibbie saw his advantage. He snatched his clumsy tool out of the fire, seated himself on the corresponding part of Angus's person, and seizing with the tongs the rope between his feet, held on to both, in spite of his heaves and kicks. In the few moments that passed while Gibbie burned through a round of the rope, Angus imagined a considerable number of pangs; but when Gibbie rose and hopped away, he discovered that his feet were at

liberty, and scrambled up, his head dizzy, and his body reeling. But such was then the sunshine of delight in Gibbie's countenance, that even Angus stared at him for a moment—only, however, with a vague reflection on the inconsequentiality of idiots, to which succeeded the impulse to take vengeance upon him for his sufferings. But Gibbie still had the tongs, and Angus's hands were still tied. He held them out to him. Gibbie pounced upon the knots with hands and teeth. They occupied him some little time, during which Angus was almost compelled to take better cognizance of the face of the savage; and dull as he was to the good things of human nature, he was yet in a measure subdued by what he there looked upon rather than perceived; while he could scarcely mistake the hearty ministration of his teeth and nails! The moment his hands were free, Gibbie looked up at him with a smile, and Angus did not even box his ears. Holding by the wall, Gibbie limped to the door and opened it. With a nod meant for thanks, the gamekeeper stepped out, took up his gun from where it leaned against the wall, and hurried away

down the hill. A moment sooner and he would have met Janet ; but she had just entered the byre again to milk poor Crummie.

When she came into the cottage, she stared with astonishment to see no Angus on the floor. Gibbie, who had lain down again in much pain, made signs that he had let him go ; whereupon such a look of relief came over her countenance that he was filled with fresh gladness, and was if possible more satisfied still with what he had done.

It was late before Robert returned—alone, weary, and disappointed. The magistrate was from home ; he had waited for him as long as he dared ; but at length, both because of his wife's unpleasant position, and the danger to himself if he longer delayed his journey across the mountain, seeing it threatened a storm, and there was no moon, he set out. That he too was relieved to find no Angus there, he did not attempt to conceal. The next day he went to see him, and told him that, to please Gibbie, he had consented to say nothing more about the affair. Angus could not help being sullen, but he judged it wise to behave as well as he could,

kept his temper therefore, and said he was sorry he had been so hasty, but that Robert had punished him pretty well, for it would be weeks before he recovered the blow on the head he had given him. So they parted on tolerable terms, and there was no further persecution of Gibbie from that quarter.

It was some time before he was able to be out again, but no hour spent with Janet was lost.

CHAPTER V.

A VOICE.

THAT winter the old people were greatly tried with rheumatism; for not only were the frosts severe, but there was much rain between. Their children did all in their power to minister to their wants, and Gibbie was nurse as well as shepherd. He who when a child had sought his place in the live universe by attending on drunk people and helping them home through the midnight streets, might have felt himself promoted considerably in having the necessities of such as Robert and Janet to minister to, but he never thought of that. It made him a little mournful sometimes to think that he could not read to them. Janet, however, was generally able to read aloud. Robert,

being also asthmatic, suffered more than she, and was at times a little impatient.

Gibbie still occupied his heather-bed on the floor, and it was part of his business, as nurse, to keep up a good fire on the hearth: peats, happily, were plentiful. Awake for this cause, he heard in the middle of one night, the following dialogue between the husband and wife.

"I'm growin' terrible auld, Janet," said Robert. "It's a sair thing this auld age, an' I canna bring mysel' content wi' 't. Ye see I haena been used till't."

"That's true, Robert," answered Janet. "Gien we had been born auld, we might by this time hae been at hame wi't. But syne what wad hae come o' the gran' delight o' seein' auld age rin hirplin awa' frae the face o' the Auncient o' Days?"

"I wad fain be contentit wi' my lot, though," persisted Robert; "but whan I fin' mysel' sae helpless like, I canna get it oot o' my heid 'at the Lord has forsaken me, an' left me to mak an ill best o' 't wantin' him."

"I wadna lat sic a thought come intil my

heid, Robert, sae lang as I kenned I cudna draw breath nor wag tongue wantin' him, for in him we leeve an' muv an' hae oor bein'. Gien he be the life o' me, what for sud I trible mysel' aboot that life?"

"Ay, lass! but gien ye hed this ashmy, makin' a' yer breist as gien 'twar lined wi' the san' paper 'at they hed been lichtin' a thoosan' or twa lucifer spunks upo'—ye micht be driven to forget 'at the Lord was yer life—for I can tell ye it's no like haein *his* breith i' yer nostrils."

"Eh, my bonny laad!" returned Janet with infinite tenderness, "I micht weel forget it! I doobt I wadna be half sae patient as yersel'; but jist to help to haud ye up, I s' tell ye what I think I wad ettle efter. I wad say to mysel', Gien he be the life o' me, I hae no business wi' ony mair o' 't nor he gies me. I hae but to tak ae breath, be 't hard, be 't easy, ane at a time, an' lat him see to the neist himsel'. Here I am, an' here's him; an' 'at he winna lat's ain wark come to ill, that I'm weel sure o'. An' ye micht jist think to yersel', Robert, 'at as ye *are* born intil the warl', an' here ye are auld intil't—ye may jist think, I say, 'at hoo ye're jist new-born an auld man, an'

beginin' to grow yoong, an' 'at that's yer business. For naither you nor me can be that far frae hame, Robert, an' whan we win there we'll be yoong eneuch, I'm thinkin'; an' no ower yoong, for we'll hae what they say ye canna get doon here—a pair o' auld heids upo' yoong shooters."

"Eh! but I wuss I may hae ye there, Janet, for I kenna what I wad do wantin' ye. I wad be unco stray up yon'er, gien I had to gang my lane, an' no you to refar till, 'at kens the w'ys o' the place."

"I ken no more about the w'ys o' the place nor yersel', Robert, though I'm thinkin' they'll be unco quaiet an' sensible, seein' 'at a' there maun be gentle fowk. It's eneuch to me 'at I'll be i' the hoose o' my Maister's father; an' my Maister was weel content to gang to that hoose; an' it maun be something by ordinar' 'at was fit for *him*. But puir simple fowk like oorsel's 'ill hae no need to hing down the heid an' luik like gowks 'at disna ken mainners. Bairns are no expeckit to ken a' the w'ys o' a muckle hoose 'at they hae never been intil i' their lives afore."

"It's no that a'thegither 'at tribles me, Janet;

it's mair 'at I'll be expectit to sing an' luik pleased-like, an' I div not ken hoo it'll be poossible, an' you naegait 'ithin my sicht or my cry, or the hearin' o' my ears "

" Div ye believe this, Robert—'at we're a' ane, jist ane, in Christ Jesus?"

" I canna weel say. I'm no denyin' naething 'at the buik tells me; ye ken me better nor that, Janet; but there's mony a thing it says 'at I dinna ken whether I believe't 'at my ain han', or whether it be only at a' thing 'at ye believe, Janet, 's jist to me as gien I believe it mysel'; an' that's a sair thought, for a man canna be savet e'en by the proxy o' 's ain wife."

" Weel, ye're just muckle whaur I fin' mysel' whiles, Robert; an' I comfort mysel' wi' the houp 'at we'll *ken* the thing there, 'at maybe we're but tryin' to believe here. But ony gait ye hae pruv't weel 'at you an' me's ane, Robert. Noo we ken frae Scriptur' 'at the Maister cam to mak aye ane o' them 'at was at twa; an' we ken also 'at he conquered Deith; sae he wad never lat Deith mak the ane 'at he had made ane, intil twa again: it's no rizon to think it. For oucht I ken, what luiks like a gangin' awa may be a comin'

nearer. An' there may be w'ys o' comin' nearer till ane anither up yon'er 'at we ken naething aboot doon here. There's that laddie, Gibbie: I canna but think 'at gien he hed the tongue to speyk, or aiven gien he cud mak' ony soon' wi' sense intil't, like singin', say, he wad fin' himsel' nearer till's nor he can i' the noo. Wha kens but them 'at's singin' up there afore the throne, may sing so bonny, 'at, i' the pooer o' their braw thoughts, their verra sangs may be like laidders for them to come doon upo', an' hing aboot them 'at they hae left ahin' them, till the time comes for them to gang an' jine them i' the green pasturs aboot the tree o' life."

More of like talk followed, but these words concerning appropinquation in song, although their meaning was not very clear, took such a hold of Gibbie that he heard nothing after, but fell asleep thinking about them.

In the middle of the following night, Janet woke her husband.

"Robert! Robert!" she whispered in his ear, "hearken. I'm thinkin' yon maun be some wee angel come doon to say, 'I ken ye, puir fowk.'"

Robert, scarce daring to draw his breath, listened with his heart in his mouth. From somewhere, apparently within the four walls of the cottage, came a low lovely sweet song—something like the piping of a big bird, something like a small human voice.

“It canna be an angel,” said Robert at length, “for it’s singin’, ‘My Nannie’s Awa’.”

“An’ what for no an angel?” returned Janet. “Isna that jist what ye micht be singin’ yersel’, efter what ye was sayin’ last nicht? I’m thinkin’ there maun be a heap o’ yoong angels up there, new deid, singin’, ‘My Nannie’s Awa’.”

“Hoot, Janet! ye ken there’s naither merryin’ nor giein’ in merriage there.”

“Wha was sayin’ onything aboot merryin’ or giein’ in merriage, Robert? Is that to say ’at you an’ me’s to be no more to ane anither nor ither fowk? Nor it’s no to say ’at, ’cause merriage is no the w’y o’ the country, ’at there’s to be naething better i’ the place o’ ’t.”

“What garred the Maister say onything aboot it, than?”

“Jist ’cause they plaguit him wi’ speirin’. He wad never hae opened his moo’ anent it—it

wasna ane o' his subjec's—gien it hadna been 'at a wheen pride-prankit beuk-fowk 'at didna believe there was ony angels, or speerits o' ony kin', but said 'at a man ance deid was aye an' a'thegither deid, an' yet preten'it to believe in God himsel' for a' that, thought to bleck (*nonplus*) the Maister wi' speirin' whilk o' saiven a puir body 'at had been garred merry them a', wad be the wife o' whan they gat up again."

"A body nicht think it wad be left to hersel' to say," suggested Robert. "She had come throu' eneuch to hae some claim to be considert."

"She maun hae been a richt guid ane," said Janet, "gien ilk ane o' the saiven wad be wantin' her again. But I s' warran' she kenned weel eneuch whilk o' them was her ain. But, Robert, man, this is jokin'—no 'at it's your wyte (*blame*)—an' it's no becomin', I doobt, upo' sic a sarious subjec'. An' I'm feart—ay! there!—I thought as muckle!—the wee sangie's drappit itsel' a'thegither, jist as gien the laverock had fa'ntit intil 'ts nest. I doobt we'll hear nae mair o' 't."

As soon as he could hear what they were

saying, Gibbie had stopped to listen ; and now they had stopped also, and there was an end.

For weeks he had been picking out tunes on his Pan's-pipes ; also, he had lately discovered that, although he could not articulate, he could produce tones, and had taught himself to imitate the pipes. Now, to his delight, he had found that the noises he made were recognized as song by his father and mother. From that time he was often heard crooning to himself. Before long he began to look about the heavens for airs—to suit this or that song he came upon, or heard from Donal.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WISDOM OF THE WISE.

CHANGE, meantime, was in progress elsewhere, and as well upon the foot as high on the side of Glashgar—change which seemed all important to those who felt the grind of the glacier as it slipped. Thomas Galbraith, of Glashruach, Esquire, whom no more than any other could negation save, was not enfranchised from folly, or lifted above belief in a lie, by his hatred to what he called superstition: he had long fallen into what will ultimately prove the most degrading superstition of all—the worship of Mammon, and was rapidly sinking from deep to lower deep. First of all, this was the superstition of placing hope and trust in that which, from age to age, and on the testimony of all sorts of persons who have tried it, has been proved

to fail utterly; next, such was the folly of the man whose wisdom was indignant with the harmless imagination of simple people for daring flutter its wings upon his land, that he risked what he loved best in the world, even better than Mammon, the approbation of fellow-worshippers, by investing in Welsh gold mines.

The property of Glashruach was a good one, but not nearly so large as it had been, and he was anxious to restore it to its former dimensions. The rents were low, and it could but tardily widen its own borders, while of money he had little, and no will to mortgage. To increase his money, that he might increase his property, he took to speculation, but had never had much success until that same year, when he disposed of certain shares at a large profit—nothing troubled by the conviction that the man who bought them—in ignorance of many a fact which the laird knew—must in all probability be ruined by them. He counted this success, and it gave him confidence to speculate further. In the meantime, with what he had thus secured, he reannexed to the property a small farm which had been for some time in the market, but

whose sale he had managed to delay. The purchase gave him particular pleasure, because the farm not only marched with his home-grounds, but filled up a great notch in the map of the property between Glashruach and the Mains, with which also it marched. It was good land, and he let it at once, on his own terms, to Mr. Duff.

In the spring, affairs looked rather bad for him, and in the month of May, he considered himself compelled to go to London: he had a faith in his own business-faculty quite as foolish as any superstition in Gormgarnet. There he fell into the hands of a certain man, whose true place would have been in the swell mob, and not in the House of Commons—a fellow who used his influence and facilities as member of Parliament in promoting bubble companies. He was intimate with an elder brother of the laird, himself member for a not unimportant borough—a man, likewise, of principles that love the shade; and between them they had no difficulty in making a tool of Thomas Galbraith, as chairman of a certain aggregate of iniquity, whose designation will not, in some

families, be forgotten for a century or so. During the summer, therefore, the laird was from home, working up the company, hoping much from it, and trying hard to believe in it—whipping up its cream, and perhaps himself taking the froth, certainly doing his best to make others take it, for an increase of genuine substance. He devoted the chamber of his imagination to the service of Mammon, and the brownie he kept there played him fine pranks.

A smaller change, though of really greater importance in the end, was, that in the course of the winter, one of Donal's sisters was engaged by the housekeeper at Glashruach, chiefly to wait upon Miss Galbraith. Ginevra was still a silent, simple, unconsciously retiring, and therewith dignified girl, in whom childhood and womanhood had begun to interchange hues, as it were with the play of colours in a dove's neck. Happy they in whom neither has a final victory! Happy also all who have such women to love! At one moment Ginevra would draw herself up—*bridle* her grandmother would have called it—with involuntary recoil

from doubtful approach; the next, Ginny would burst out in a merry laugh at something in which only a child could have perceived the mirth-causing element; then again the woman would seem suddenly to re-enter and rebuke the child, for the sparkle would fade from her eyes, and she would look solemn, and even a little sad. The people about the place loved her, but from the stillness on the general surface of her behaviour, the far away feeling she gave them, and the impossibility of divining how she was thinking except she chose to unbosom herself, they were all a little afraid of her as well. They did not acknowledge, even to themselves, that her evident conscientiousness bore no small part in causing that slight uneasiness of which they were aware in her presence. Possibly it roused in some of them such a dissatisfaction with themselves as gave the initiative to dislike of her.

In the mind of her new maid, however, there was no strife, therefore no tendency to dislike. She was thoroughly well-meaning, like the rest of her family, and finding her little mistress dwell in the same atmosphere, the desire to be

acceptable to her awoke at once, and grew rapidly in her heart. She was the youngest of Janet's girls, about four years older than Donal, not clever, but as sweet as honest, and full of divine service. Always ready to think others better than herself, the moment she saw the still face of Ginevra, she took her for a little saint, and accepted her as a queen, whose will to her should be law. Ginevra, on her part, was taken with the healthy hue, and honest eyes of the girl, and neither felt any dislike to her touching her hair, nor lost her temper when she was awkward and pulled it. Before the winter was over, the bond between them was strong.

One principal duty required of Nicie—her parents had named her after the mother of St. Paul's Timothy—was to accompany her mistress every fine day to the manse, a mile and a half from Glashruach. For some time Ginevra had been under the care of Miss Machar, the daughter of the parish clergyman, an old gentleman of sober aspirations, to whom the last century was the Augustan age of English literature. He was genial, gentle, and a lover

of his race, with much reverence for, and some faith in a Scotch God, whose nature was summed up in a series of words beginning with *omni*. Partly that the living was a poor one, and her father old and infirm, Miss Machar, herself middle-aged, had undertaken the instruction of the little heiress, never doubting herself mistress of all it was necessary a lady should know. By nature she was romantic, but her romance had faded a good deal. Possibly had she read the new poets of her age, the vital flame of wonder and hope might have kept not a little of its original brightness in her heart; but under her father's guidance, she had never got beyond the Night Thoughts, and the Course of Time. Both intellectually and emotionally, therefore, Miss Machar had withered instead of ripening. As to her spiritual carriage, she thought too much about being a lady to be thoroughly one. The utter graciousness of the ideal lady would blush to regard itself. She was both gentle and dignified; but would have done a nature inferior to Ginevra's injury by the way she talked of things right and wrong as becoming or not becoming in a lady of position such as Ginevra

would one day find herself. What lessons she taught her she taught her well. Her music was old-fashioned of course ; but I have a fancy that perhaps the older the music one learns first, the better ; for the deeper is thereby the rooting of that which will have the atmosphere of the age to blossom in. But then to every lover of the truth, a true thing is dearer because it is old-fashioned, and dearer because it is new-fashioned ; and true music, like true love, like all truth, laughs at the god Fashion, because it knows him to be but an ape.

Every day, then, except Saturday and Sunday, Miss Machar had for two years been in the habit of walking or driving to Glashruach, and there spending the morning hours ; but of late her father had been ailing, and as he was so old that she could not without anxiety leave him when suffering from the smallest indisposition, she had found herself compelled either to give up teaching Ginevra, or to ask Mr. Galbraith to allow her to go, when such occasion should render it necessary, to the manse. She did the latter ; the laird had consented ; and thence arose the duty required of Nicie. Mr. Machar's

health did not improve as the spring advanced, and by the time Mr. Galbraith left for London, he was confined to his room, and Ginevra's walk to the manse for lessons had settled into a custom.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BEAST BOY.

ONE morning they found, on reaching the manse, that the minister was very unwell, and that in consequence Miss Machar could not attend to Ginevra ; they turned, therefore, to walk home again. Now the manse, upon another root of Glashgar, was nearer than Glashruach to Nicie's home, and many a time as she went and came, did she lift longing eyes to the ridge that hid it from her view. This morning, Ginevra observed that, every other moment, Nicie was looking up the side of the mountain, as if she saw something unusual upon it—occasionally, indeed, when the winding of the road turned their backs to it, stopping and turning round to gaze.

“What is the matter with you, Nicie?” she

asked. "What are you looking at up there?"

"I'm won'erin' what my mother'll be deein'," answered Nicie: "she's up there."

"Up there!" exclaimed Ginny, and, turning, stared at the mountain too, expecting to perceive Nicie's mother somewhere up on the face of it.

"Na, na, missie! ye canna see her," said the girl; "she's no in sicht. She's ower ayont there. Only gien we war up whaur ye see you twa three sheep again' the lift (*sky*), we cud see the bit hoosie whaur her an' my father bides."

"How I *should* like to see your father and mother, Nicie!" exclaimed Ginevra.

"Weel, I'm sure they wad be richt glaid to see yersel', missie, ony time 'at ye likit to gang an' see them."

"Why shouldn't we go now, Nicie? It's not a dangerous place, is it?"

"No, missie. Glashgar's as quaiet an' weel-behaved a hill as ony in a' the cweentry," answered Nicie, laughing. "She's some puir, like the lave o' 's, an' hasna muckle to spare, but the sheep get a feow nibbles upon her, here an'

there; an' my mither manages to keep a coo, an' get plenty o' milk frae her tee."

"Come, then, Nicie. We have plenty of time. Nobody wants either you or me, and we shall get home before any one misses us."

Nicie was glad enough to consent; they turned at once to the hill, and began climbing. But Nicie did not know this part of it nearly so well as that which lay between Glashruach and the cottage, and after they had climbed some distance, often stopping and turning to look down on the valley below, the prospect of which, with its streams and river, kept still widening and changing as they ascended, they arrived at a place where the path grew very doubtful, and she could not tell in which of two directions they ought to go.

"I'll take this way, and you take that, Nicie," said Ginevra, "and if I find there is no path my way, I will come back to yours; and if you find there is no path your way, you will come back to mine."

It was a childish proposal, and one to which Nicie should not have consented, but she was little more than a child herself. Advancing a

short distance in doubt, and the path re-appearing quite plainly, she sat down, expecting her little mistress to return directly. No thought of anxiety crossed her mind : how should one, in broad sunlight, on a mountain side, in the first of summer, and with the long day before them ? So, there sitting in peace, Nicie fell into a maidenly reverie, and so there Nicie sat for a long time, half dreaming in the great light, without once really thinking about anything. All at once she came to herself : some latent fear had exploded in her heart : yes ! what could have become of her little mistress ? She jumped to her feet, and shouted "Missie ! Missie Galbraith ! Ginny !" but no answer came back. The mountain was as still as a midnight. She ran to the spot where they had parted, and along the other path : it was plainer than that where she had been so idly forgetting herself. She hurried on, wildly calling as she ran.

In the meantime Ginevra, having found the path indubitable, and imagining it led straight to the door of Nicie's mother's cottage, and that Nicie would be after her in a moment, thinking also to have a bit of fun with her, set off danc-

ing and running so fast, that by the time Nicie came to herself, she was a good mile from her. What a delight it was to be thus alone upon the grand mountain! with the earth banished so far below, and the great rocky heap climbing and leading and climbing up and up towards the sky!

Ginny was not in the way of thinking much about God. Little had been taught her concerning him, and nothing almost that was pleasant to meditate upon—nothing that she could hide in her heart, and be dreadfully glad about when she lay alone in her little bed, listening to the sound of the burn that ran under her window. But there was in her soul a large wilderness ready for the voice that should come crying to prepare the way of the king.

The path was after all a mere sheep-track, and led her at length into a lonely hollow in the hill-side, with a swampy peat-bog at the bottom of it. She stopped. The place looked unpleasant, reminding her of how she always felt when she came unexpectedly upon Angus Mac Pholp. She would go no further alone; she would wait till Nicie overtook her. It must

have been just in such places that the people possessed with devils—only Miss Machar always made her read the word, *demons*—ran about! As she thought thus, a lone-hearted bird uttered a single, wailing cry, strange to her ear. The cry remained solitary, unanswered, and then first suddenly she felt that there was nobody there but herself, and the feeling had in it a pang of uneasiness. But she was a brave child; nothing frightened her much except her father: she turned and went slowly back to the edge of the hollow: Nicie must by this time be visible.

In her haste and anxiety, however, Nicie had struck into another sheep-track, and was now higher up the hill; so that Ginny could see no living thing nearer than in the valley below: far down there—and it was some comfort, in the desolation that now began to invade her—she saw upon the road, so distant that it seemed motionless, a cart with a man in it, drawn by a white horse. Never in her life before had she felt that she was alone. She had often felt lonely, but she had always known where to find the bodily presence of somebody. Now she might cry and scream the whole day, and no-

body answer! Her heart swelled into her throat, then sank away, leaving a wide hollow. It was so eerie! But Nicie would soon come, and then all would be well.

She sat down on a stone, where she could see the path she had come a long way back. But "*never and never*" did any Nicie appear. At last she began to cry. This process with Ginny was a very slow one, and never brought her much relief. The tears would mount into her eyes, and remain there, little pools of Baca, a long time before the crying went any further. But with time the pools would grow deeper, and swell larger, and at last, when they had become two huge little lakes, the larger from the slowness of their gathering, two mighty tears would tumble over the edges of their embankments, and roll down her white mournful cheeks. This time many more followed, and her eyes were fast becoming fountains, when all at once a verse she had heard the Sunday before at church seemed to come of itself into her head: "Call upon me in the time of trouble and I will answer thee." It must mean that she was to ask God to help her: was that the same

as saying prayers? But she wasn't good, and he wouldn't hear anybody that wasn't good. Then, if he was only the God of the good people, what was to become of the rest when they were lost on mountains? She had better try; it could not do much harm. Even if he would not hear her, he would not surely be angry with her for calling upon him when she was in such trouble. So thinking, she began to pray to what dim distorted reflection of God there was in her mind. They alone pray to the real God, the maker of the heart that prays, who know his son Jesus. If our prayers were heard only in accordance with the idea of God to which we seem to ourselves to pray, how miserably would our infinite wants be met! But every honest cry, even if sent into the deaf ear of an idol, passes on to the ears of the unknown God, the heart of the unknown Father.

"O God, help me home again," cried Ginevra, and stood up in her great loneliness to return.

The same instant she spied, seated upon a stone, a little way off, but close to her path, the beast-boy. There could be no mistake. He was just as she had heard him described by the

children at the gamekeeper's cottage. That was his hair sticking all out from his head, though the sun in it made it look like a crown of gold or a shining mist. Those were his bare arms, and that was dreadful indeed! Bare legs and feet she was used to; but bare arms! Worst of all, making it absolutely certain he was the beast-boy, he was playing upon a curious kind of whistling thing, making dreadfully sweet music to entice her nearer that he might catch her and tear her to pieces! Was this the answer God sent to the prayer she had offered in her sore need—the beast-boy? She asked him for protection and deliverance, and here was the beast-boy! She asked him to help her home, and there, right in the middle of her path, sat the beast-boy, waiting for her! Well, it was just like what they said about him on Sundays in the churches, and in the books Miss Machar made her read! But the horrid creature's music should not have any power over her! She would rather run down to the black water, glooming in those holes, and be drowned, than the beast-boy should have her to eat!

Most girls would have screamed, but such was

not Ginny's natural mode of meeting a difficulty. With fear, she was far more likely to choke than to cry out. So she sat down again and stared at him. Perhaps he would go away when he found he could not entice her. He did not move, but kept playing on his curious instrument. Perhaps, by returning into the hollow, she could make a circuit, and so pass him, lower down the hill. She rose at once and ran.

Now Gibbie had seen her long before she saw him, but, from experience, was afraid of frightening her. He had therefore drawn gradually near, and sat as if unaware of her presence. Treating her as he would a bird with which he wanted to make better acquaintance, he would have her get accustomed to the look of him before he made advances. But when he saw her run in the direction of the swamp, knowing what a dangerous place it was, he was terrified, sprung to his feet, and darted off to get between her and the danger. She heard him coming like the wind at her back, and, whether from bewilderment, or that she did intend throwing herself into the water to escape

him, instead of pursuing her former design, she made straight for the swamp. But was the beast-boy ubiquitous? As she approached the place, there he was, on the edge of a great hole half full of water, as if he had been sitting there for an hour! Was he going to drown her in that hole? She turned again, and ran towards the descent of the mountain. But there Gibbie feared a certain precipitous spot; and, besides, there was no path in that direction. So Ginevra had not run far before again she saw him right in her way. She threw herself on the ground in despair, and hid her face. After thus hunting her as a cat might a mouse, or a lion a man, what could she look for but that he would pounce upon her, and tear her to pieces? Fearfully expectant of the horrible grasp, she lay breathless. But nothing came. Still she lay, and still nothing came. Could it be that she was dreaming? In dreams generally the hideous thing never arrived. But she dared not look up. She lay and lay, weary and still, with the terror slowly ebbing away out of her. At length to her ears came a strange sweet voice of singing—such a sound

as she had never heard before. It seemed to come from far away : what if it should be an angel God was sending, in answer after all to her prayer, to deliver her from the beast-boy ! He would of course want some time to come, and certainly no harm had happened to her yet. The sound grew and grew, and came nearer and nearer. But although it was song, she could distinguish no vowel-melody in it, nothing but a tone-melody, a crooning, as it were, ever upon one vowel in a minor key. It came quite near at length, and yet even then had something of the far away sound left in it. It was like the wind of a summer night inside a great church bell in a deserted tower. It came close, and ceased suddenly, as if, like a lark, the angel ceased to sing the moment he lighted. She opened her eyes and looked up. Over her stood the beast-boy, gazing down upon her ! Could it really be the beast-boy ? If so, then he was fascinating her, to devour her the more easily, as she had read of snakes doing to birds ; but she could not believe it. Still—she could not take her eyes off him—that was certain. But no marvel ! From under a great crown of

reddish gold, looked out two eyes of heaven's own blue, and through the eyes looked out something that dwells behind the sky and every blue thing. What if the angel, to try her, had taken to himself the form of the beast-boy? No beast-boy could sing like what she had heard, or look like what she now saw! She lay motionless, flat on the ground, her face turned sideways upon her hands, and her eyes fixed on the heavenly vision. Then a curious feeling began to wake in her of having seen him before—somewhere, ever so long ago—and that sight of him as well as this had to do with misery—with something that made a stain that would not come out. Yes—it was the very face, only larger, and still sweeter, of the little naked child whom Angus had so cruelly lashed! That was ages ago, but she had not forgotten, and never could forget either the child's back, or the lovely innocent white face that he turned round upon her. If it was indeed he, perhaps he would remember her. In any case, she was now certain he would not hurt her.

While she looked at him thus, Gibbie's face grew grave: seldom was his face grave when

fronting the face of a fellow creature, but now he too was remembering, and trying to recollect: as through a dream of sickness and pain he saw a face like the one before him, yet not the same.

Ginevra recollected first, and a sweet slow diffident smile crept like a dawn up from the depth of her underworld to the sky of her face, but settled in her eyes, and made two stars of them. Then rose the very sun himself in Gibbie's, and flashed a full response of daylight—a smile that no woman, girl or matron, could mistrust. From brow to chin his face was radiant. The sun of this world had made his nest in his hair, but the smile below it seemed to dim the aureole he wore. Timidly yet trustingly Ginevra took one hand from under her cheek, and stretched it up to him. He clasped it gently. She moved, and he helped her to rise.

“I've lost Nicie,” she said.

Gibbie nodded, but did not look concerned.

“Nicie is my maid,” said Ginevra.

Gibbie nodded several times. He knew who Nicie was rather better than her mistress.

"I left her away back there, a long, long time ago, and she has never come to me," she said.

Gibbie gave a shrill loud whistle that startled her. In a few seconds, from somewhere unseen, a dog came bounding to him over stones and heather. How he spoke to the dog, or what he told him to do, she had not an idea; but the next instant Oscar was rushing along the path she had come, and was presently out of sight. So full of life was Gibbie, so quick and decided was his every motion, so full of expression his every glance and smile, that she had not yet begun to wonder he had not spoken; indeed she was hardly yet aware of the fact. She knew him now for a mortal, but, just as it had been with Donal and his mother, he continued to affect her as a creature of some higher world, come down on a mission of good-will to men. At the same time she had, oddly enough, a feeling as if the beast-boy were still somewhere not far off, held aloof only by the presence of the angel who had assumed his shape.

Gibbie took her hand, and led her towards the path she had left; she yielded without a movement of question. But he did not lead

her far in that direction; he turned to the left up the mountain. It grew wilder as they ascended. But the air was so thin and invigorating, the changes so curious and interesting, as now they skirted the edge of a precipitous rock, now scrambled up the steepest of paths by the help of the heather that nearly closed over it, and the reaction of relief from the terror she had suffered so exciting, that she never for a moment felt tired. Then they went down the side of a little burn—a torrent when the snow was dissolving, and even now a good stream, whose dance and song delighted her: it was the same, as she learned afterwards, to whose song under her window she listened every night in bed, trying in vain to make out the melted tune. Ever after she knew this, it seemed, as she listened, to come straight from the mountain to her window, with news of the stars and the heather and the sheep. They crossed the burn and climbed the opposite bank. Then Gibbie pointed, and there was the cottage, and there was Nicie coming up the path to it, with Oscar bounding before her! The dog was merry, but Nicie was weeping bitterly. They

were a good way off, with another larger burn between; but Gibbie whistled, and Oscar came flying to him. Nicie looked up, gave a cry, and like a sheep to her lost lamb came running.

“Oh, missie!” she said, breathless, as she reached the opposite bank of the burn, and her tone had more than a touch of sorrowful reproach in it, “what garred ye rin awa’?”

“There *was* a road, Nicie, and I thought you would come after me.”

“I was a muckle geese, missie; but eh! I’m glaid I hae gotten ye. Come awa’ an’ see my mother.”

“Yes, Nicie. We’ll tell her all about it. You see I haven’t got a mither to tell, so I will tell yours.”

From that hour Nicie’s mother was a mother to Ginny as well.

“Anither o’ ’s lambs to feed!” she said to herself.

If a woman be a mother she may have plenty of children.

Never before had Ginny spent such a happy day, drunk such milk as Crummie’s, or eaten such cakes as Janet’s. She saw no more of

Gibbie: the moment she was safe, he and Oscar were off again to the sheep, for Robert was busy cutting peats that day, and Gibbie was in sole charge. Eager to know about him, Ginevra gathered all that Janet could tell of his story, and in return told the little she had seen of it, which was the one dreadful point.

"Is he a good boy, Mistress Grant?" she asked.

"The best boy ever I kenned—better nor my ain Donal, an' he was the best afore him," answered Janet.

Ginny gave a little sigh, and wished she were good.

"Whan saw ye Donal?" asked Janet of Nicie.

"No this lang time—no sin' I was here last," answered Nicie, who did not now get home so often as the rest.

"I was thinkin'," returned her mother, "ye sud 'maist see him noo frae the back o' the muckle hoose; for he was tellin' me he was wi' the nowt i' the new meadow upo' the Lorrie bank, 'at missie's papa boucht frae Jeames Glass."

“Ow, is he there?” said Nicie. “I’ll maybe get sicht, gien I dinna get word o’ him. He cam ance to the kitchen-door to see me, but Mistress Mac Farlane wadna lat him in. She wad hae nae loons comin’ aboot the place, she said. I said ’at hoo he was my brither. She said, says she, that was naething to her, an’ she wad hae no brithers. My sister nicht come whiles, she said, gien she camna ower aften; but lasses had naething to dee wi’ brithers. Wha was to tell wha was or wha wasna my brither? I tellt her ’at a’ my brithers was weel kenned for douce laads; an’ she tellt me to haud my tongue, an’ no speyk up; an’ I cud hae jist gien her a guid clout o’ the lug—I was that angert wi’ her.”

“She’ll be soary for’t some day,” said Janet, with a quiet smile; “an’ what a body’s sure to be soary for, ye may as weel forgie them at ance.”

“Hoo ken ye, mither, she’ll be soary for’t?” asked Nicie, not very willing to forgive Mistress Mac Farlane.

“’Cause the Maister says ’at we’ll hae to pay the uttermost fardin’. There’s naebody ’ill be latten aff. We maun dee oor neiper richt.”

"But michtna the Maister himsel' forgie her?" suggested Nicie, a little puzzled.

"Lassie," said her mother solemnly, "ye dinna surely think 'at the Lord's forgifness is to lat fowk aff ohn repentit? That wad be a strange fawvour to grant them! He winna hurt mair nor he can help; but the grue (*horror*) maun mak w'y for the grace. I'm sure it was sae whan I gied you yer whups, lass. I'll no say aboot some o' the first o' ye, for at that time I didna ken sae weel what I was aboot, an' was mair angert whiles nor there was ony occasion for—tuik my beam to dang their motes. I hae been sair tribled aboot it, mony's the time."

"Eh, mither!" said Nicie, shocked at the idea of her reproaching herself about anything concerning her children, "I'm weel sure there's no ane o' them wad think, no to say *say*, sic a thing."

"I daursay ye're richt there, lass. I think whiles a woman's bairns are like the God they cam frae—aye ready to forgie her onything."

Ginevra went home with a good many things to think about.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LORRIE MEADOW.

IT was high time, according to agricultural economics, that Donal Grant should be promoted a step in the ranks of labour. A youth like him was fit for horses and their work, and looked idle in a field with cattle. But Donal was not ambitious, at least in that direction. He was more and more in love with books, and learning, and the music of thought and word; and he knew well that no one doing a man's work upon a farm could have much time left for study—certainly not a quarter of what the herd-boy could command. Therefore, with his parents' approval, he continued to fill the humbler office, and receive the scantier wages belonging to it.

The day following their adventure on Glash-

gar, in the afternoon, Nicie being in the grounds with her little mistress, proposed that they should look whether they could see her brother down in the meadow of which her mother had spoken. Ginevra willingly agreed, and they took their way through the shrubbery to a certain tall hedge which divided the grounds from a little grove of larches on the slope of a steep bank descending to the Lorrie, on the other side of which lay the meadow. It was a hawthorn hedge, very old, and near the ground very thin, so that they easily found a place to creep through. But they were no better on the other side, for the larches hid the meadow. They went down through them, therefore, to the bank of the little river—the largest tributary of the Daur from the roots of Glashgar.

“There he is!” cried Nicie.

“I see him,” responded Ginny, “—with his cows all about the meadow.”

Donal sat a little way from the river, reading.

“He’s aye at ’s buik!” said Nicie.

“I wonder what book it is,” said Ginny.

“That wad be ill to say,” answered Nicie.

“Donal reads a hantle o’ buiks—mair, his

mither says, nor she doobts he can weel get the guid o'."

"Do you think it's Latin, Nicie?"

"Ow! I daursay. But no; it canna be Laitin—for, leuk! he's lauchin', an' he cudna dee that gien 'twar Laitin. I'm thinkin' it'll be a story: there's a heap o' them prentit noo, they tell me. Or 'deed maybe it may be a sang. He thinks a heap o' sangs. I h'ard my mither ance say she was some feared Donal nicht hae ta'en to makin' sangs himsel'; no 'at there was ony ill i' that, she said, gien there wasna ony ill i' the sangs themsel's; but it was jist some trifflin' like, she said, an' they luikit for better frae Donal, wi' a' his buik lear, an' his Euclid—or what ca' they't?—nor makin' sangs."

"What's Euclid, Nicie?"

"Ye may weel speir, missie! but I hae ill tellin' ye. It's a keerious name till a buik, an' min's me o' naething but whan the lid o' yer e'e yeuks (*itches*); an' as to what lies atween the twa brods o' 't, I ken no more nor the man i' the meen."

"I should like to ask Donal what book he has got," said Ginny.

"I'll cry till 'im, an' ye can speir," said Nicie.
—"Donal!—Donal!"

Donal looked up, and seeing his sister, came running to the bank of the stream.

"Canna ye come ower, Donal?" said Nicie.
"Here's Miss Galbraith wants to spier ye a queston."

Donal was across in a moment, for here the water was nowhere over a foot or two in depth.

"Oh, Donal! you've wet your feet!" cried Ginevra.

Donal laughed.

"What ill 'ill that dee me, mem?"

"None, I hope," said Ginny; "but it might, you know."

"I micht hae been droont," said Donal.

"Nicie," said Ginny, with dignity, "your brother is laughing at me."

"Na, na, mem," said Donal, apologetically.
"I was only so glaid to see you an' Nicie 'at I forgot my mainners."

"Then," returned Ginny, quite satisfied, "would you mind telling me what book you were reading?"

"It's a buik o' ballants," answered Donal. "I'll read ane o' them till ye, gien ye like, mem."

"I should like very much," responded Ginny. "I've read all my own books till I'm tired of them, and I don't like papa's books.—And, do you know, Donal!"—Here the child-woman's voice grew solemn sad—"—I'm very sorry, and I'm frightened to say it; and if you weren't Nicie's brother, I couldn't say it to you;—but I am very tired of the Bible too."

"That's a peety, mem," replied Donal. "I wad hae ye no tell onybody that; for them 'at likes 't no a hair better themsel's, 'ill tak ye for waur nor a haithen for sayin' 't. Jist gang ye up to my mither, an' tell *her* a' about it. She's aye fair to a' body, an' never thinks ill o' onybody 'at says the trowth—whan it's no for contrariness. She says 'at a heap o' ill comes o' fowk no speykin' oot what they ken, or what they're thinkin', but aye guissin' at what they dinna ken, an' what ither fowk's thinkin'."

"Ay!" said Nicie, "it wad be a gey cheenged warl' gien fowk gaed to my mither, an' did as she wad hae them. She says fowk sud never

tell but the ill they ken o' themsel's, an' the guid they ken o' ither fowk; an' that's jist the contrar', ye ken, missie, to what fowk maistly dis dee."

A pause naturally followed, which Ginny broke.

"I don't think you told me the *name* of the book you were reading, Donal," she said.

"Gien ye wad sit doon a meenute, mem," returned Donal, "—here's a bonnie gowany spot—I wad read a bit till ye, an' see gien ye likit it, afore I tellt ye the name o' 't."

She dropped at once on the little gowany bed, gathered her frock about her ankles, and said,

"Sit down, Nicie. It's so kind of Donal to read something to us! I wonder what it's going to be."

She uttered everything in a deliberate, old-fashioned way, with precise articulation, and a certain manner that an English mother would have called priggish, but which was only the outcome of Scotch stiffness, her father's rebukes, and her own sense of propriety.

Donal read the ballad of *Kemp Owen*.

"I think—I think—I don't think I understand it," said Ginerva. "It is very dreadful, and—and—I don't know what to think. Tell me about it, Donal.—Do *you* know what it means, Nicie?"

"No ae glimp, missie," answered Nicie.

Donal proceeded at once to an exposition. He told them that the serpent was a lady, enchanted by a wicked witch, who, after she had changed her, twisted her three times round the tree, so that she could not undo herself, and laid the spell upon her that she should never have the shape of a woman, until a knight kissed her as often as she was twisted round the tree. Then, when the knight did come, at every kiss a coil of her body unwound itself, until, at the last kiss, she stood before him the beautiful lady she really was.

"What a good, kind, brave knight!" said Ginevra.

"But it's no true, ye ken, missie," said Nicie, anxious that she should not be misled. "It's naething but Donal's nonsense."

"Nonsense here, nonsense there!" said Donal, "I see a heap o' sense intil 't. But nonsense or

no, Nicie, it's nane o' *my* nonsense : I wuss it war. It's hun'ers o' years auld, that ballant, I s' warran'."

"It's *beautiful*," said Ginevra, with decision and dignity. "I hope he married the lady, and they lived happy ever after."

"I dinna ken, mem. The man 'at made the ballant, I daursay, thought him weel peyed gien the bonny leddy said *thank ye* till him."

"Oh! but, Donal, that wouldn't be enough! —Would it, Nicie?"

"Weel, ye see, missie," answered Nicie, "he but gae her three kisses—that wasna sae muckle to waur (*lay out*) upon a body."

"But a serpent!—a serpent's mouth, Nicie!"

Here, unhappily, Donal had to rush through the burn without leave-taking, for Hornie was attempting a trespass; and the two girls, thinking it was time to go home, rose, and climbed to the house at their leisure.

The rest of the day Ginevra talked of little else than the serpent lady and the brave knight, saying now and then what a nice boy that Donal of Nicie's was. Nor was more than the gentlest hint necessary to make Nicie remark,

the next morning, that perhaps, if they went down again to the Lorrie, Donal might come, and bring the book. But when they reached the bank and looked across, they saw him occupied with Gibbie. They had their heads close together over a slate, upon which now the one, now the other, seemed to be drawing. This went on and on, and they never looked up. Ginny would have gone home, and come again in the afternoon, but Nicie instantly called Donal. He sprang to his feet and came to them, followed by Gibbie. Donal crossed the burn, but Gibbie remained on the other side, and when presently Donal took his "buik o' ballants" from his pocket, and the little company seated themselves, stood with his back to them, and his eyes on the *nowt*. That morning they were not interrupted.

Donal read to them for a whole hour, concerning which reading, and Ginevra's reception of it, Nicie declared she could not see what for they made sic a wark about a wheen auld ballants, ane efter anither.—"They're no half sae bonnie as the paraphrases, Donal," she said.

After this, Ginevra went frequently with

Nicie to see her mother, and learned much of the best from her. Often also they went down to the Lorrie, and had an interview with Donal, which was longer or shorter as Gibbie was there or not to release him.

Ginny's life was now far happier than it had ever been. New channels of thought and feeling were opened, new questions were started, new interests awaked; so that, instead of losing by Miss Machar's continued inability to teach her, she was learning far more than she could give her, learning it, too, with the pleasure which invariably accompanies true learning.

Little more than child as she was, Donal felt from the first the charm of her society; and she by no means received without giving, for his mental development was greatly expedited thereby. Few weeks passed before he was her humble squire, devoted to her with all the chivalry of a youth for a girl whom he supposes as much his superior in kind as she is in worldly position; his sole advantage, in his own judgment, and that which alone procured him the privilege of her society, being, that he was older, and therefore knew a little more. So

potent and genial was her influence on his imagination, that, without once thinking of her as their object, he now first found himself capable of making verses—such as they were; and one day, with his book before him—it was Burns, and he had been reading the Gowan poem to Ginevra and his sister—he ventured to repeat, as if he read them from the book, the following: they halted a little, no doubt, in rhythm, neither were perfectly rimed, but for a beginning, they had promise. Gibbie, who had thrown himself down on the other bank, and lay listening, at once detected the change in the tone of his utterance, and before he ceased had concluded that he was not reading them, and that they were his own.

Rin, burnie! clatter;
To the sea win:
Gien I was a watter,
Sae wad I rin.

Blaw, win', caller, clean!
Here an' hyne awa:
Gien I was a win',
Wadna I blaw!

Shine, auld sun,
Shine strang an' fine:
Gien I was the sun's son,
Herty I wad shine.

Hardly had he ended, when Gibbie's pipes began from the opposite side of the water, and, true to time and cadence and feeling, followed with just the one air to suit the song—from which Donal, to his no small comfort, understood that one at least of his audience had *received* his lilt. If the poorest nature in the world responds with the tune to the mightiest master's song, he knows, if not another echo should come back, that he has uttered a true cry. But Ginevra had not received it, and being therefore of her own mind, and not of the song's, was critical. It is of the true things it does not, perhaps cannot receive, that human nature is most critical.

“That one is nonsense, Donal,” she said. “Is n't it now? How could a man be a burn, or a wind, or the sun? But poets *are* silly. Papa says so.”

In his mind Donal did not know which way to look; physically, he regarded the ground. Happily at that very moment Hornie caused a diversion, and Gibbie understood what Donal was feeling too well to make even a pretence of going after her. I must, to his praise, record

the fact that, instead of wreaking his mortification upon the cow, Donal spared her several blows out of gratitude for the deliverance her misbehaviour had wrought him. He was in no haste to return to his audience. To have his first poem *thus* rejected was killing. She was but a child who had so unkindly criticized it, but she was the child he wanted to please; and for a few moments life itself seemed scarcely worth having. He called himself a fool, and resolved never to read another poem to a girl so long as he lived. By the time he had again walked through the burn, however, he was calm and comparatively wise, and knew what to say.

“Div ye hear yon burn efter ye gang to yer bed, mem?” he asked Ginevra, as he climbed the bank, pointing a little lower down the stream to the mountain brook which there joined it.

“Always,” she answered. “It runs right under my window.”

“What kin’ o’ a din dis’t mak’?” he asked again.

“It is different at different times,” she an-

swered. "It sings and chatters in summer, and growls and cries and grumbles in winter, or after rain up in Glashgar."

"Div ye think the burn's ony happier i' the summer, mem?"

"No, Donal; the burn has no life in it, and therefore can't be happier one time than another."

"Weel, mem, I wad jist like to speir what waur it is to fancy yersel' a burn, than to fancy the burn a body, ae time singin' an' chatterin', an' the neist growlin' an' grum'lin'."

"Well, but, Donal, *can* a man be a burn?"

"Weel, mem, *no*—at least no i' this warl', an' at 'is ain wull. But whan ye're lyin' hearkenin' to the burn, did ye never imagine yersel' rinnin' doon wi' 't—doon to the sea?"

"No, Donal; I always fancy myself going up the mountain where it comes from, and running about wild there in the wind, when all the time I know I'm safe and warm in bed."

"Weel, maybe that's better yet—I wadna say," answered Donal; "but jist the nicht, for a cheenge like, ye turn an' gang doon wi' 't—i' yer thoughts, I mean. Lie an' hearken

he'rty till 't the nicht, whan ye're i' yer bed ;
hearken an' hearken till the soon' rins awa' wi'
ye like, an' ye forget a' aboot yersel', an' think
yersel' awa' wi' the burn, rinnin', rinnin', throu'
this an' throu' that, throu' stanes an' birks an'
bracken, throu' heather, an' ploed lan' an' corn,
an' wuds an' gairdens, aye singin', an' aye
cheengin' yer tune accordin', till it wins to the
muckle roarin' sea, an' 's a' tint. An' the first
nicht 'at the win' 's up an' awa', dee the same,
mem, wi' the win'. Get up upo' the back o' 't,
like, as gien it was yer muckle horse, an' jist
ride him to the deith ; an' efter that, gien ye
dinna maybe jist wuss 'at ye was a burn or a
blawin' win'—aither wad be a sair loss to the
universe—ye wunna, I'm thinkin', be sae ready
to fin' fau't wi' the chield 'at made yon bit
sangy."

"Are you vexed with me, Donal?—I'm so
sorry!" said Ginevra, taking the earnestness of
his tone for displeasure.

"Na, na, mem. Ye're ower guid an' ower
bonny," answered Donal, "to be a vex to ony-
body ; but it *wad* be a vex to hear sic a cratur
as you speykin' like ane o' the fules o' the

warl', 'at believe i' naething but what comes in at the holes i' their heid."

Ginevra was silent. She could not quite understand Donal, but she felt she must be wrong somehow; and of this she was the more convinced when she saw the beautiful eyes of Gibbie fixed in admiration, and brimful of love, upon Donal.

The way Donal kept his vow never to read another poem of his own to a girl, was to proceed that very night to make another for the express purpose, as he lay awake in the darkness.

The last one he ever read to her in that meadow was this :

What gars ye sing, said the herd laddie,

What gars ye sing sae lood?

To tice them oot o' the yerd, laddie,

The worms, for my daily food.

An' aye he sang, an' better he sang,

An' the worms creepit in an' oot;

An' ane he tuik, an' twa he loot gang,

But still he carolled stoot.

It's no for the worms, sir, said the herd,

They comena for yer sang.

Think ye sae, sir? answered the bird,

Maybe ye're no i' the wrang,

But aye &c.

Sing ye yoong sorrow to beguile,
Or to gie auld fear the flegs?
Na, quo' the mavis; it's but to wile
My wee things oot o' her eggs.
An' aye &c.

The mistress is plenty for that same gear,
Though ye sangna ear' nor late.
It's to draw the deid frae the moul' sae drear,
An' open the kirkyard gate.
An' aye &c.

Na, na; it's a better sang nor yer ain,
Though ye hae o' notes a feck,
'At wad mak auld Barebanes there sae fain
As to lift the muckle sneck!
But aye &c.

Better ye sing nor a burn i' the mune,
Nor a wave ower san' that flows,
Nor a win' wi' the glintin' stars abune,
An' aneth the roses in rows;
An' aye &c.

But I'll speir ye nae mair, sir, said the herd.
I fear what ye micht say neist.
Ye wad but won'er the mair, said the bird,
To see the thoughts i' my breist.

And aye he sang, an' better he sang,
An' the worms creepit in an' oot;
An' ane he tuik, an' twa he loot gang,
But still he carolled stoot.

I doubt whether Ginevra understood this song better than the first, but she was now more careful of criticizing; and when by degrees it dawned upon her that he was the maker

of these and other verses he read, she grew half afraid of Donal, and began to regard him with big eyes ; he became, from a herd-boy, an unintelligible person, therefore a wonder. For, brought thus face to face with the maker of verses, she could not help trying to think how he did the thing ; and as she felt no possibility of making verses herself, it remained a mystery and an astonishment, causing a great respect for the poet to mingle with the kindness she felt towards Nicie's brother.

CHAPTER IX.

THEIR REWARD.

BY degrees Gibbie had come to be well known about the Mains and Glashruach. Angus's only recognition of him was a scowl in return for his smile; but, as I have said, he gave him no farther annoyance, and the tales about the beast-loon were dying out from Daurside. Jean Mavor was a special friend to him: for she knew now well enough who had been her brownie, and made him welcome as often as he showed himself with Donal. Fergus was sometimes at home; sometimes away; but he was now quite a fine gentleman, a student of theology, and only condescendingly cognizant of the existence of Donal Grant. All he said to him when he came home a master of arts, was, that he had expected better of him: he ought to be

something more than herd by this time. Donal smiled and said nothing. He had just finished a little song that pleased him, and could afford to be patronized. I am afraid, however, he was not contented with that, but in his mind's eye measured Fergus from top to toe.

In the autumn, Mr. Galbraith returned to Glashruach, but did not remain long. His schemes were promising well, and his self-importance was screwed yet a little higher in consequence. But he was kinder than usual to Ginevra. Before he went he said to her that, as Mr. Machar had sunk into a condition requiring his daughter's constant attention, he would find her an English governess as soon as he reached London; meantime she must keep up her studies by herself as well as she could. Probably he forgot all about it, for the governess was not heard of at Glashruach, and things fell into their old way. There was no spiritual traffic between the father and daughter, consequently Ginevra never said anything about Donal or Gibbie, or her friendship for Nicie. He had himself to blame altogether; he had made it impossible for her to talk to him. But it was

well he remained in ignorance, and so did not put a stop to the best education she could at this time of her life have been having—such as neither he nor any friend of his could have given her.

It was interrupted, however, by the arrival of the winter—a wild time in that region, fierce storm alternating with the calm of death. After howling nights, in which it seemed as if all the *polter-geister* of the universe must be out on a disembodied lark, the mountains stood there in the morning solemn still, each with his white turban of snow unrumped on his head, in the profoundest silence of blue air, as if he had never in his life passed a more thoughtful, peaceful time than the very last night of all. To such feet as Ginevra's the cottage on Glashgar was for months almost as inaccessible as if it had been in Sirius. More than once the Daur was frozen thick; for weeks every beast was an absolute prisoner to the byre, and for months was fed with straw and turnips and potatoes and oilcake. Then was the time for stories; and often in the long dark, while yet it was hours too early for bed, would Ginevra go with

Nicie, who was not much of a *raconteuse*, to the kitchen, to get one of the other servants to tell her an old tale. For even in his own daughter and his own kitchen, the great laird could not extinguish the accursed superstition. Not a glimpse did Ginevra get all this time of Donal or of Gibbie.

At last, like one of its own flowers in its own bosom, the spring began again to wake in God's thought of his world; and the snow, like all other deaths, had to melt and run, leaving room for hope; then the summer woke smiling, as if she knew she had been asleep; and the two youths and the two maidens met yet again on Lorrie bank, with the brown water lalling over the stones, the gold nuggets of the broom hanging over the water, and the young larch-wood scenting the air all up the brae side between them and the house, which the tall hedge hid from their view. The four were a year older, a year nearer trouble, and a year nearer getting out of it. Ginevra was more of a woman, Donal more of a poet, Nicie as nice and much the same, and Gibbie, if possible, more a foundling of the universe than ever. He was growing

steadily, and showed such freedom and ease, and his motions were all so rapid and direct, that it was plain at a glance the beauty of his countenance was in no manner or measure associated with weakness. The mountain was a grand nursery for him, and the result, both physical and spiritual, corresponded. Janet, who, better than anyone else, knew what was in the mind of the boy, revered him as much as he revered her; the first impression he made upon her had never worn off—had only changed its colour a little. More even than a knowledge of the truth, is a readiness to receive it; and Janet saw from the first that Gibbie's ignorance at its worst was but room vacant for the truth: when it came it found bolt nor bar on door or window, but had immediate entrance. The secret of this power of reception was, that to see a truth and to do it was one and the same thing with Gibbie. To know and not do would have seemed to him an impossibility, as it is in vital idea a monstrosity.

This unity of vision and action was the main cause also of a certain daring simplicity in the exercise of the imagination, which so far from

misleading him reacted only in obedience—which is the truth of the will—the truth, therefore, of the whole being. He did not do the less well for his sheep, that he fancied they knew when Jesus Christ was on the mountain, and always at such times both fed better and were more frolicsome. He thought Oscar knew it also, and interpreted a certain look of the dog by the supposition that he had caught a sign of the bodily presence of his maker. The direction in which his imagination ran forward, was always that in which his reason pointed; and so long as Gibbie's fancies were bud-blooms upon his obedience, his imagination could not be otherwise than in harmony with his reason. Imagination is a poor root, but a worthy blossom, and in a nature like Gibbie's its flowers cannot fail to be lovely. For no outcome of a man's nature is so like himself as his imaginations, except it be his fancies, indeed. Perhaps his imaginations show what he is meant to be, his fancies what he is making of himself.

In the summer, Mr. Galbraith, all unannounced, reappeared at Glashruach, but so changed that, startled at the sight of him,

Ginevra stopped midway in her advance to greet him. The long thin man was now haggard and worn ; he looked sourer too, and more suspicious—either that experience had made him so, or that he was less equal to the veiling of his feelings in dignified indifference. He was annoyed that his daughter should recognize an alteration in him, and turning away, leaned his head on the hand whose arm was already supported by the mantelpiece, and took no further notice of her presence ; but perhaps conscience also had something to do with this behaviour. Ginevra knew from experience that the sight of tears would enrage him, and with all her might repressed those she felt beginning to rise. She went up to him timidly, and took the hand that hung by his side. He did not repel her—that is, he did not push her away, or even withdraw his hand, but he left it hanging lifeless, and returned with it no pressure upon hers—which was much worse.

“Is anything the matter, papa ?” she asked with trembling voice.

“I am not aware that I have been in the habit of communicating with you on the sub-

ject of my affairs," he answered ; " nor am I likely to begin to do so, where my return after so long an absence seems to give so little satisfaction."

" Oh, papa ! I was frightened to see you looking so ill."

" Such a remark upon my personal appearance is but a poor recognition of my labours for your benefit, I venture to think, Jenny," he said.

He was at the moment contemplating, as a necessity, the sale of every foot of the property her mother had brought him. Nothing less would serve to keep up his credit, and gain time to disguise more than one failing scheme. Everything had of late been going so badly, that he had lost a good deal of his confidence and self-satisfaction ; but he had gained no humility instead. It had not dawned upon him yet that he was not unfortunate, but unworthy. The gain of such a conviction is to a man enough to outweigh infinitely any loss that even his unworthiness can have caused him ; for it involves some perception of the worthiness of the truth, and makes way for the

utter consolation which the birth of that truth in himself will bring. As yet Mr. Galbraith was but overwhelmed with care for a self which, so far as he had had to do with the making of it, was of small value indeed, although in the possibility which is the birthright of every creature, it was, not less than that of the wretchedest of dog-licked Lazaruses, of a value by himself unsuspected and inappreciable. That he should behave so cruelly to his one child, was not unnatural to that self with which he was so much occupied: failure had weakened that command of behaviour which so frequently gains the credit belonging only to justice and kindness, and a temper which never was good, but always feeling the chain, was ready at once to show its ugly teeth. He was a proud man, whose pride was always catching cold from his heart. He might have lived a hundred years in the same house with a child that was not his own, without feeling for her a single movement of affection.

The servants found more change in him than Ginevra did; his relations with them, if not better conceived than his paternal ones, had

been less evidently defective. Now he found fault with every one, so that even Joseph dared hardly open his mouth, and said he must give warning. The day after his arrival, having spent the morning with Angus, walking over certain fields, much desired, he knew, of a neighbouring proprietor, inwardly calculating the utmost he could venture to ask for them with a chance of selling, he scolded Ginevra severely on his return because she had not had lunch, but had waited for him ; whereas a little reflection might have shown him she dared not take it without him. Naturally, therefore, she could not now eat, because of a certain sensation in her throat. The instant he saw she was not eating, he ordered her out of the room : he would have no such airs in his family ! By the end of the week—he arrived on the Tuesday—such a sense of estrangement possessed Ginevra, that she would turn on the stair and run up again, if she heard her father's voice below. Her aversion to meeting him, he became aware of, and felt relieved in regard to the wrong he was doing his wife, by reflecting upon her daughter's behaviour towards him ; for he had

a strong constitutional sense of what was fair, and a conscience disobeyed becomes a cancer.

In this evil mood he received from some one—all his life Donal believed it was Fergus—a hint concerning the relations between his daughter and his tenant's herd-boy. To describe his feelings at the bare fact that such a hint was possible, would be more labour than the result would repay.—What! his own flesh and blood, the heiress of Glashruach, derive pleasure from the boorish talk of such a companion! It could not be true, when the mere thought without the belief of it, filled him with such indignation! He was overwhelmed with a righteous disgust. He did himself the justice of making himself certain before he took measures; but he never thought of doing them the justice of acquainting himself first with the nature of the intercourse they held. But it mattered little; for he would have found nothing in that to give him satisfaction, even if the thing itself had not been outrageous. He watched and waited, and more than once pretended to go from home: at last one morning, from the larch-wood, he saw the unnatural girl seated with her maid on the

bank of the river, the cow-herd reading to them, and on the other side the dumb idiot lying listening. He was almost beside himself—with what, I can hardly define. In a loud voice of bare command he called to her to come to him. With a glance of terror at Nicie she rose, and they went up through the larches together.

I will not spend my labour upon a reproduction of the verbal torrent of wrath, wounded dignity, disgust, and contempt, with which the father assailed his shrinking, delicate, honest-minded woman-child. For Nicie, he dismissed her on the spot. Not another night would he endure her in the house, after her abominable breach of confidence! She had to depart without even a good-bye from Ginevra, and went home weeping, in great dread of what her mother would say.

“Lassie,” said Janet, when she heard her story, “gien onybody be to blame it’s mysel’; for ye loot me ken ye gaed whiles wi’ yer bonnie missie to hae a news wi’ Donal, an’ I saw an’ see noucht ’at’s wrang intill’t. But the fowk o’ this warl’ has ither w’ys o’ jeedgin’ o’

things, an' I maun bethink mysel' what lesson o' the serpent's wisdom I hae to learn frae 't. Ye're walcome hame, my bonnie lass. Ye ken I aye keep the wee closet ready for ony o' ye 'at micht come ohn expeckit."

Nicie, however, had not long to occupy the closet, for those of her breed were in demand in the country.

CHAPTER X.

PROLOGUE.

EVER since he became a dweller in the air of Glashgar, Gibbie, mindful of his first visit thereto, and of his grand experience on that occasion, had been in the habit, as often as he saw reason to expect a thunder-storm, and his duties would permit, of ascending the mountain, and there, on the crest of the granite peak, awaiting the arrival of the tumult. Everything antagonistic in the boy, everything that could naturally find relief, or pleasure, or simple outcome, in resistance or contention, debarred as it was by the exuberance of his loving kindness from obtaining satisfaction or alleviation in strife with his fellows, found it wherever he could encounter the forces of Nature, in personal wrestle with them where possible, and al-

ways in wildest sympathy with any uproar of the elements. The absence of personality in them allowed the co-existence of sympathy and antagonism in respect of them. Except those truths awaking delight at once calm and profound, of which so few know the power, and the direct influence of human relation, Gibbie's emotional joy was more stirred by storm than by anything else ; and with all forms of it he was so familiar that, young as he was, he had unconsciously begun to generalize on its phases.

Towards the evening of a wondrously fine day in the beginning of August—a perfect day of summer in her matronly beauty, it began to rain. All the next day the slopes and stairs of Glashgar were alternately glowing in sunshine, and swept with heavy showers, driven slanting in strong gusts of wind from the northwest. How often he was wet through and dried again that day, Gibbie could not have told. He wore so little that either took but a few moments, and he was always ready for a change. The wind and the rain together were cold, but that only served to let the sunshine deeper into him when it returned.

In the afternoon there was less sun, more rain, and more wind; and at last the sun seemed to give it up; the wind grew to a hurricane, and the rain strove with it which should inhabit the space. The whole upper region was like a huge mortar, in which the wind was the pestle, and, with innumerable gyres, vainly ground at the rain. Gibbie drove his sheep to the refuge of a pen on the lower slope of a valley that ran at right angles to the wind, where they were sheltered by a rock behind, forming one side of the enclosure, and dykes of loose stones, forming the others, at a height there was no tradition of any flood having reached. He then went home, and having told Robert what he had done, and had his supper, set out in the early-failing light, to ascend the mountain. A great thunder-storm was at hand, and was calling him. It was almost dark before he reached the top, but he knew the surface of Glasbgar nearly as well as the floor of the cottage. Just as he had fought his way to the crest of the peak in the face of one of the fiercest of the blasts abroad that night, a sudden rush of fire made the heavens like the smoke-filled vault of

an oven, and at once the thunder followed, in a succession of single sharp explosions without any roll between. The mountain shook with the windy shocks, but the first of the thunderstorm was the worst, and it soon passed. The wind and the rain continued, and the darkness was filled with the rush of the water everywhere wildly tearing down the sides of the mountain. Thus heaven and earth held communication in torrents all the night. Down the steep slopes of the limpid air they ran to the hard sides of the hills, where at once, as if they were no longer at home, and did not like the change, they began to work mischief. To the ears and heart of Gibbie their noises were a mass of broken music. Every spring and autumn the floods came, and he knew them, and they were welcome to him in their seasons.

It required some care to find his way down through the darkness and the waters to the cottage, but as he was neither in fear nor in haste, he was in little danger, and his hands and feet could pick out the path where his eyes were useless. When at length he reached his bed, it was not for a long time to sleep, but to

lie awake and listen to the raging of the wind all about and above and below the cottage, and the rushing of the streams down past it on every side. To his imagination it was as if he lay in the very bed of the channel by which the waters of heaven were shooting to the valleys of the earth; and when he fell asleep at last, his dream was of the rush of the river of the water of life from under the throne of God; and he saw men drink thereof, and everyone as he drank straightway knew that he was one with the Father, and one with every child of his throughout the infinite universe.

He woke, and what remained of his dream was love in his heart, and in his ears the sound of many waters. It was morning. He rose, and, dressing hastily, opened the door. What a picture of grey storm rose outspread before him! The wind fiercely invaded the cottage, thick charged with water-drops, and stepping out he shut the door in haste, lest it should blow upon the old people in bed and wake them. He could not see far on any side, for the rain that fell, and the mist and steam that rose, upon which the wind seemed to have no

power; but wherever he did see, there water was running down. Up the mountain he went—he could hardly have told why. Once, for a moment, as he ascended, the veil of the vapour either rose, or was torn asunder, and he saw the great wet gleam of the world below. By the time he reached the top, it was as light as it was all the day; but it was with a dull yellow glare, as if the sun were obscured by the smoke and vaporous fumes of a burning world which the rain had been sent to quench. It was a wild, hopeless scene—as if God had turned his face away from the world, and all Nature was therefore drowned in tears—no Rachel weeping for her children, but the whole creation crying for the Father, and refusing to be comforted. Gibbie stood gazing and thinking. Did God like to look at the storm he made? If Jesus did, would he have left it all and gone to sleep, when the wind and waves were howling, and flinging the boat about like a toy between them? He must have been tired, surely! With what? Then first Gibbie saw that perhaps it tired Jesus to heal people; that every time what cured man or woman was

life that went out of him, and that he missed it, perhaps—not from his heart, but from his body; and if it were so, then it was no wonder if he slept in the midst of a right splendid storm. And upon that Gibbie remembered what St. Matthew says just before he tells about the storm—that “he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.”

That moment it seemed as if he must be himself in some wave-tossed boat, and not upon a mountain of stone, for Glashgar gave a great heave under him, then rocked and shook from side to side a little, and settled down so still and steady, that motion and the mountain seemed again two ideas that never could be present together in any mind. The next instant came an explosion, followed by a frightful roaring and hurling, as of mingled water and stones; and on the side of the mountain beneath him he saw what, through the mist, looked like a cloud of smoke or dust rising to a height. He darted towards it. As he drew nearer, the

cloud seemed to condense, and presently he saw plainly enough that it was a great column of water shooting up and out from the face of the mountain. It sank and rose again, with the alternation of a huge pulse: the mountain was cracked, and through the crack, with every throb of its heart, the life-blood of the great hull of the world seemed beating out. Already it had scattered masses of gravel on all sides, and down the hill a river was shooting in sheer cataract, raving and tearing, and carrying stones and rocks with it like foam. Still and still it pulsed and rushed and ran, born, like another Xanthus, a river full-grown, from the heart of the mountain.

Suddenly Gibbie, in the midst of his astonishment and awful delight, noted the path of the new stream, and from his knowledge of the face of the mountain, perceived that its course was direct for the cottage. Down the hill he shot after it, as if it were a wild beast that his fault had freed from its cage. He was not terrified. One believing like him in the perfect Love and perfect Will of a Father of men, as the fact of facts, fears nothing. Fear is faithlessness. But

there is so little that is worthy the name of faith, that such a confidence will appear to most not merely incredible but heartless. The Lord himself seems not to have been very hopeful about us, for he said, When the son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? A perfect faith would lift us absolutely above fear. It is in the cracks, crannies, and gulfy faults of our belief, the gaps that are not faith, that the snow of apprehension settles, and the ice of unkindness forms.

The torrent had already worn for itself a channel: what earth there was, it had swept clean away to the rock, and the loose stones it had thrown up aside, or hurled with it in its headlong course. But as Gibbie bounded along, following it with a speed almost equal to its own, he was checked in the midst of his hearty haste by the sight, a few yards away, of another like terror—another torrent issuing from the side of the hill, and rushing to swell the valley stream. Another and another he saw, with growing wonder, as he ran; before he reached home he passed some six or eight, and had begun to think whether a second deluge

of the whole world might not be at hand, commencing this time with Scotland. Two of them joined the one he was following, and he had to cross them as he could; the others he saw near and farther off—one foaming deliverance after another, issuing from the entrails of the mountain, like imprisoned demons, that, broken from their bonds, ran to ravage the world with the accumulated hate of dreariest centuries. Now and then a huge boulder, loosened from its bed by the trail of this or that watery serpent, would go rolling, leaping, bounding down the hill before him, and just in time he escaped one that came springing after him as if it were a living thing that wanted to devour him. Nor was Glashgar the only torrent-bearing mountain of Gormgarnet that day, though the rain prevented Gibbie from seeing anything of what the rest of them were doing. The fountains of the great deep were broken up, and seemed rushing together to drown the world. And still the wind was raging, and the rain tumbling to the earth, rather in sheets than in streams.

Gibbie at length forsook the bank of the new torrent to take the nearest way home, and soon

reached the point whence first, returning in that direction, he always looked to see the cottage. For a moment he was utterly bewildered: no cottage was to be seen. From the top of the rock against which it was built, shot the whole mass of the water he had been pursuing, now dark with stones and gravel, now grey with foam, or glassy in the lurid light.

“O Jesus Christ!” he cried, and darted to the place. When he came near, to his amazement there stood the little house unharmed, the very centre of the cataract! For a few yards on the top of the rock, the torrent had a nearly horizontal channel, along which it rushed with unabated speed to the edge, and thence shot clean over the cottage, dropping only a dribble of rain on the roof from the underside of its half-arch. The garden ground was gone, swept clean from the bare rock, which made a fine smooth shoot for the water a long distance in front. He darted through the drizzle and spray, reached the door, and lifted the hatch. The same moment he heard Janet’s voice in joyful greeting.

“Noo, noo! come awa’, laddie,” she said.

“Wha wad hae thought we wad hae to lea’ the rock to win oot o’ the water? We’re but wait-in’ you to gang.—Come, Robert, we’ll awa’ doon the hill.”

She stood in the middle of the room in her best gown, as if she had been going to church, her bible, a good sized octavo, under her arm, with a white handkerchief folded round it, and her umbrella in her hand.

“He that believeth shall not make haste,” she said, “but he maunna tempt the Lord, aither. Drink that milk, Gibbie, an’ pit a bannock i’ yer pooch, an’ come awa’.”

Robert rose from the edge of the bed, staff in hand, ready too. He also was in his Sunday clothes. Oscar, who could make no change of attire, but was always ready, and had been standing looking up in his face for the last ten minutes, wagged his tail when he saw him rise, and got out of his way. On the table were the remains of their breakfast of oat-cake and milk—the fire Janet had left on the hearth was a spongy mass of peat, as wet as the winter before it was dug from the bog, so they had had no porridge. The water kept coming in splashes

down the *lum*, the hillocks of the floor were slimy, and in the hollows little lakes were gathering: the lowest film of the torrent-water ran down the rock behind, and making its way between rock and roof, threatened soon to render the place uninhabitable.

"What's the eese o' lo'denin' yersel' wi' the umbrell?" said Robert. "Ye'll get it a' drookit (*drenched*)."

"Ow, I'll jist tak it," replied Janet, with a laugh in acknowledgment of her husband's fun; "it'll haud the rain ohn blin't me."

"That's gien ye be able to haud it up. I doobt the win' 'll be ower sair upo''t. I'm thinkin', though, it'll be mair to haud yer beuk dry!"

Janet smiled and made no denial.

"Noo, Gibbie," she said, "ye gang an' lowse Crummie. But ye'll hae to lead her. She winna be to caw in sic a win' 's this, an' no plain ro'd afore her."

"Whaur div ye think o' gauin'?" asked Robert, who, satisfied as usual with whatever might be in his wife's mind, had not till this moment thought of asking her where she meant to take refuge.

“Ow, we’ll jist mak for the Mains, gien ye be agreeable, Robert,” she answered. “It’s there we belang till, an’ in wather like this nae-body wad refeese bield till a beggar, no to say Mistress Jean till her ain fowk.”

With that she led the way to the door and opened it.

“His v’ice was like the soon’ o’ mony watters,” she said to herself softly, as the liquid thunder of the torrent came in the louder.

Gibbie shot round the corner to the byre, whence through all the roar, every now and then they had heard the cavernous mooing of Crummie, piteous and low. He found a stream a foot deep running between her fore and hind legs, and did not wonder that she wanted to be on the move. Speedily he loosed her, and fastening the chain-tether to her halter, led her out. She was terrified at sight of the falling water, and they had some trouble in getting her through behind it, but presently after, she was making the descent as carefully and successfully as any of them.

It was a heavy undertaking for the two old folk to walk all the way to the Mains, and in

such a state of the elements ; but where there is no choice, we do well to make no difficulty. Janet was half troubled that her mountain, and her foundation on the rock, should have failed her ; but consoled herself that they were but shadows of heavenly things and figures of the true ; and that a mountain or a rock was in itself no more to be trusted than a horse or a prince or the legs of a man. Robert plodded on in contented silence, and Gibbie was in great glee, singing, after his fashion, all the way, though now and then half-choked by the fierceness of the wind round some corner of rock, filled with rain-drops that stung like hailstones.

By and by Janet stopped and began looking about her. This naturally seemed to her husband rather odd in the circumstances.

“What are ye efter, Janet?” he said, shouting through the wind from a few yards off, by no means sorry to stand for a moment, although any recovering of his breath seemed almost hopeless in such a tempest.

“I want to lay my umbrell in safty,” answered Janet, “—gien I cud but perceive a shuitable spot. Ye was richt, Robert ; it’s

mair w'alth nor I can get the guid o'."

"Hoots! fling't frae ye, than, lass," he returned. "Is this a day to be thinkin' o' warl' 's gear?"

"What for no, Robert?" she rejoined. "Ae day's as guid's anither for thinkin' about onything the richt gait."

"What!" retorted Robert, "—whan we hae ta'en oor lives in oor han', an' can no more than houp we may cairry them throu' safe!"

"What's that 'at ye ca' oor lives, Robert? The Maister never made muckle o' the savin' o' sic like's them. It seems to me they're naething but a kin' o' warl' 's gear themsel's."

"An' yet," argued Robert, "ye'll tak thought about an auld umbrell? Whaur's yer consistency, lass?"

"Gien I war tribled about my life," said Janet, "I cud ill spare thought for an auld umbrell. But they baith tribble me sae little, 'at I may jist as weel luik efter them baith. It's auld an' casten an' bow-ribbit, it's true, but it wad ill become me to drap it wi'oot a thought, whan him 'at could mak haill loaves, said, 'Gether up the fragments 'at naething be lost.'

—Na,” she continued; still looking about her,
“I maun jist dee my duty by the auld umbrell;
syne come o’ ’t ’at likes, I carena.”

So saying, she walked to the lee side of a rock, and laid the umbrella close under it, then a few large stones upon it to keep it down.

I may add, that the same umbrella, recovered, and with two new ribs, served Janet to the day of her death.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MAINS.

THEY reached at length the valley road. The water that ran in the bottom was the Lorrie. Three days ago it was a lively little stream, winding and changing within its grassy banks—here resting silent in a deep pool, there running and singing over its pebbles. Now it had filled and far overflowed its banks, and was a swift river. It had not yet, so far up the valley, encroached on the road; but the torrents from the mountain had already in places much injured it, and with considerable difficulty they crossed some of the new-made gullies. When they approached the bridge, however, by which they must cross the Lorrie to reach the Mains, their worst trouble lay before them. For the enemy, with whose reinforcements they had all

the time been descending, showed himself ever in greater strength the farther they advanced; and here the road was flooded for a long way on both sides of the bridge. There was therefore a good deal of wading to be done; but the road was an embankment, there was little current, and in safety at last they ascended the rising ground on which the farm-building stood. When they reached the yard, they sent Gibbie to find shelter for Crummie, and themselves went up to the house.

"The Lord preserve 's!" cried Jean Mavor, with uplifted hands, when she saw them enter the kitchen.

"He'll dee that, mem," returned Janet, with a smile.

"But what *can* he dee? Gien ye be droont oot o' the hills, what's to come o' hiz i' the how? I wad ken that!" said Jean.

"The watter's no up to yer door yet," remarked Janet.

"God forbid!" retorted Jean, as if the very mention of such a state of things was too dreadful to be polite. "—But, eh, ye're weet!"

"Weet s no the word," said Robert, trying to laugh, but failing from sheer exhaustion, and the beginnings of an asthmatic attack.

The farmer, hearing their voices, came into the kitchen—a middle-sized and middle-aged, rather coarse-looking man, with keen eyes, who took snuff amazingly. His manner was free, with a touch of satire. He was proud of driving a hard bargain, but was thoroughly hospitable. He had little respect for person or thing, but showed an occasional touch of tenderness.

"Hoot, Rob!" he said roughly as he entered, "I thought ye had mair sense! What's brought ye here at sic a time?"

But as he spoke he held out his snuff-box to the old man.

"Fell needcessity, sir," answered Robert, taking a good pinch.

"Necessity!" retorted the farmer. "Was ye oot o' meal?"

"Oot o' dry meal, I doobt, by this time, sir," replied Robert.

"Hoots! I wuss we war a' in like necessity—weel up upo' the hill i'stead o' doon here upo' the haugh (*river-meadow*). It's jist clean ridic'l-

ous. Ye sud hae kenned better at your age, Rob. Ye sud hae thought twise, man."

"'Deed, sir," answered Robert, quietly finishing his pinch of snuff, "there was sma' need, an' less time to think, an' Glashgar bursten, an' the watter comin' ower the tap o' the bit hoosie as gien 'twar a muckle owershot wheel, an' no a place for fowk to bide in. Ye dinna think Janet an' me wad be twa sic auld fules as pit on oor Sunday claes to sweem in, gien we thought to see things as we left them whan we gaed back! Ye see, sir, though the hoose be fun't upo' a rock, it's maist biggit o' fells, an' the fundation's a' I luik even to see o' 't again. Whan the force o' the watter grows less, it'll come down upo' the riggin' wi' the haill weicht o' 't."

"Ay!" said Janet, in a low voice, "the live stanes maun come to the live rock to bigg the hoose 'at'll stan."

"What think ye, Maister Fergus, you 'at's gauin' to be a minister?" said Robert, referring to his wife's words, as the young man looked in at the door of the kitchen.

"Lat him be," interposed his father, blowing

his nose with unnecessary violence ; “ setna him preachin’ afore’s time. Fess the whusky, Fergus, an’ gie auld Robert a dram. Haith ! gien the watter be rinnin’ ower the tap o’ yer hoose, man, it was time to flit. Fess twa or three glaisses, Fergus ; we hae a’ need o’ something ’at’s no watter. It’s perfectly ridic’lous ! ”

Having taken a little of the whisky, the old people went to change their clothes for some Jean had provided, and in the meantime she made up her fire, and prepared some breakfast for them.

“ An’ whaur’s yer dummie ? ” she asked, as they re-entered the kitchen.

“ He had puir Crummie to luik efter,” answered Janet ; “ but he nicht hae been in or this time.”

“ He’ll be wi’ Donal i’ the byre, nae doobt,” said Jean : “ he’s aye some shy o’ comin’ in wantin’ an inveet.” She went to the door, and called with a loud voice across the yard, through the wind and the clashing torrents, “ Donal, sen’ Dummie in till’s brakfast.”

“ He’s awa’ till’s sheep,” cried Donal in reply.

“ Preserve ’s !—the cratur ’ll be lost ! ” said Jean.

“Less likly nor ony man aboot the place,” bawled Donal, half angry with his mistress for calling his friend *dummie*. “Gibbie kens better what he’s aboot nor ony twa ’at thinks him a fule ’cause he canna lat oot sic stuff an’ nonsense as they canna haud in.”

Jean went back to the kitchen, only half reassured concerning her brownie, and far from contented with his absence. But she was glad to find that neither Janet nor Robert appeared alarmed at the news.

“I wuss the cratur had had some brakfast,” she said.

“He has a piece in ’s pooch,” answered Janet. “He’s no oonprovidit wi’ what can be made mair o’.”

“I dinna richtly un’erstan’ ye there,” said Jean.

“Ye canna hae failt to remark, mem,” answered Janet, “’at whan the Maister set himsel’ to feed the hungerin’ thoosan’s, he teuk intil’s han’ what there was, an’ vroucht upo’ that to mak mair o’ ’t. I hae wussed sometimes ’at the laddie wi’ the five barley loaves an’ the twa sma’ fishes, hadna been there that day. I wad

fain ken hoo the Maister wad hae managed wantin' onything to begin upo'. As it was, he aye hang what he did upo' something his Father had dune afore him."

"Hoots!" returned Jean, who looked upon Janet as a lover of conundrums, "ye're aye warstlin' wi' run k-nots an' teuch moo'fu's."

"Ow na, no aye," answered Janet; "—only whiles, whan the speerit o' speirin' gets the upper han' o' me for a sizon."

"I doobt that same speerit 'ill lead ye far frae the still watters some day, Janet," said Jean, stirring the porridge vehemently.

"Ow, I think not," answered Janet very calmly. "Whan the Maister says—*what's that to thee?*—I tak care he hasna to say't twise, but jist get up an' follow him."

This was beyond Jean, but she held her peace, for, though she feared for Janet's orthodoxy, and had a strong opinion of the superiority of her own common sense—in which, as in the case of all who pride themselves in the same, there was a good deal more of the *common* than of the *sense*—she had the deepest conviction of Janet's goodness, and regarded her

as a sort of heaven-favoured idiot, whose utterances were somewhat privileged. Janet, for her part, looked upon Jean as "an honest wuman, wha 'll get a heap o' licht some day."

When they had eaten their breakfast, Robert took his pipe to the barn, saying there was not much danger of fire that day; Janet washed up the dishes, and sat down to her Book; and Jean went out and in, attending to many things.

Meantime the rain fell, the wind blew, the water rose. Little could be done beyond feeding the animals, threshing a little corn in the barn, and twisting straw ropes for the thatch of the ricks of the coming harvest—if indeed there was a harvest on the road, for, as the day went on, it seemed almost to grow doubtful whether any ropes would be wanted; while already not a few of last year's ricks, from farther up the country, were floating past the Mains, down the Daur to the sea. The sight was a dreadful one—had an air of the day of judgment about it to farmers' eyes. From the Mains, to right and left beyond the rising ground on which the farm buildings stood, everywhere as far as the bases of the hills, instead of fields was water,

yellow brown, here in still expanse or slow progress, there sweeping along in fierce current. The quieter parts of it were dotted with trees, divided by hedges, shaded with ears of corn; upon the swifter parts floated objects of all kinds.

Mr. Duff went wandering restlessly from one spot to another, finding nothing to do. In the gloaming, which fell the sooner that a rain-blanket miles thick wrapt the earth up from the sun, he came across from the barn, and entering the kitchen, dropped, weary with hopelessness, on a chair.

"I can weel un'erstan'," he said, "what for the Lord sud set doon Bony an' set up Louy, but what for he sud gar corn grow, an' syne sen' a spate to sweem awa' wi' 't, that's mair nor mortal man can see the sense o'.—Haud yer tongue, Janet. I'm no sayin' there's onything wrang; I'm sayin' naething but the sair trowth, 'at I canna see the what-for o' 't. I canna see the guid o' 't till onybody. A'thing 's on the ro'd to the German Ocean. The lan' 's jist miltin' awa' intill the sea!"

Janet sat silent, knitting hard at a stocking

she had got hold of, that Jean had begun for her brother. She knew argument concerning the uses of adversity was vain with a man who knew of no life but that which consisted in eating and drinking, sleeping and rising, working and getting on in the world: as to such things existing only that they may subserve a real life, he was almost as ignorant, notwithstanding he was an elder of the church, as any heathen.

From being nearly in the centre of its own land, the farm-steading of the Mains was at a considerable distance from any other; but there were two or three cottages upon the land, and as the evening drew on, another aged pair, who lived in one only a few hundred yards from the house, made their appearance, and were soon followed by the wife of the foreman with her children, who lived farther off. Quickly the night closed in, and Gibbie was not come. Robert was growing very uneasy; Janet kept comforting and reassuring him.

“There’s ae thing,” said the old man: “Oscar’s wi’ ’im.”

“Ay,” responded Janet, unwilling, in the

hearing of others, to say a word that might seem to savour of rebuke to her husband, yet pained that he should go to the dog for comfort—"Ay; he's a well-made animal, Oscar! There's been a fowth o' sheep-care pitten intil 'im. Ye see him 'at made 'im, bein' a shepherd himsel', kens what's wantit o' the dog."—None but her husband understood what lay behind the words.

"Oscar's no wi' 'im," said Donal. "The dog cam to me i' the byre, lang efter Gibbie was awa', greitin' like, an' luikin' for 'im."

Robert gave a great sigh, but said nothing.

Janet did not sleep a wink that night: she had so many to pray for. Not Gibbie only, but every one of her family was in perils of waters, all being employed along the valley of the Daur. It was not, she said, confessing to her husband her sleeplessness, that she was afraid. She was only "keepin' them company, an' haudin' the yett open," she said. The latter phrase was her picture-periphrase for *praying*. She never said she *prayed*; she *held the gate open*. The wonder is but small that Donal should have turned out a poet.

The dawn appeared—but the farm had van-

ished. Not even heads of growing corn were anywhere more to be seen. The loss would be severe, and John Duff's heart sank within him. The sheep which had been in the mown clover-field that sloped to the burn, were now all in the corn-yard, and the water was there with them. If the rise did not soon cease, every rick would be afloat. There was little current, however, and not half the danger there would have been had the houses stood a few hundred yards in any direction from where they were.

"Tak yer brakfast, John," said his sister.

"Lat them tak 'at hungers," he answered.

"Tak, or ye'll no hae the wut to save," said Jean.

Thereupon he fell to, and ate, if not with appetite, then with a will that was wondrous.

The flood still grew, and still the rain poured, and Gibbie did not come. Indeed no one any longer expected him, whatever might have become of him : except by boat the Mains was inaccessible now, they thought. Soon after breakfast, notwithstanding, a strange woman came to the door. Jean, who opened it to her knock, stood and stared speechless. It was a grey-

haired woman, with a more disreputable look than her weather-flouted condition would account for.

“Gran’ wither for the deuks!” she said.

“Whaur come *ye* frae?” returned Jean, who did not relish the freedom of her address.

“Frae ower by,” she answered.

“An’ hoo wan *ye* here?”

“Upo’ my twa legs.”

Jean looked this way and that over the watery waste, and again stared at the woman in growing bewilderment.—They came afterwards to the conclusion that she had arrived, probably half-drunk, the night before, and passed it in one of the out-houses.

“Yer legs maun be langer nor they luik than, wuman,” said Jean, glancing at the lower part of the stranger’s person.

The woman only laughed—a laugh without any laughter in it.

“What’s yer wull, noo ’at *ye are* here?” continued Jean, with severity. “Ye camna to the Mains to tell them there what kin’ o’ wather it wis!”

“I cam whaur I cud win,” answered the

woman; "an' for my wull, that's naething to naebody noo—it's no as it was ance—though, gien I cud get it, there nicht be mair nor me the better for't. An' sae as ye wad gang the len'th o' a glaiss o' whusky——"

"Ye s' get nae whusky here," interrupted Jean, with determination.

The woman gave a sigh, and half turned away as if she would depart. But however she might have come, it was plainly impossible she should depart and live.

"Wuman," said Jean, "I ken an' I care naething about ye; an' mair, I dinna like ye, nor the luik o' ye; and gien 't war a fine simmer nicht 'at a body cud lie thereoot, or gang the farther, I wad steek the door i' yer face; but that I daurna dee the day again' my neebour's soo; sae ye can come in an' sit doon, an', my min' spoken, ye s' get what'll haud the life i' ye, an' a puckle strae i' the barn. Only ye maun jist hae a quaiet sough, for the gudeman disna like tramps."

"Tramps here, tramps there!" exclaimed the woman, starting into high displeasure; "I wad hae ye ken I'm an honest wuman, an' no tramp!"

“Ye sudna luik sae like ane than,” said Jean coolly. “But come yer wa’s in, an’ I’s say nae-thing sae lang as ye behave.”

The woman followed her, took the seat pointed out to her by the fire, and sullenly ate, without a word of thanks, the cakes and milk handed her, but seemed to grow better tempered as she ate, though her black eyes glowed at the food with something of disgust and more of contempt: she would rather have had a gill of whisky than all the milk on the Mains. On the other side of the fire sat Janet, knitting away busily, with a look of ease and leisure. She said nothing, but now and then cast a kindly glance out of her grey eyes at the woman: there was an air of the lost sheep about the stranger, which, in whomsoever she might see it, always drew her affection. “She maun be ane o’ them the Maister cam’ to ca’,” she said to herself. But she was careful to suggest no approach, for she knew the sheep that has left the flock has grown wild, and is more suspicious and easily startled than one in the midst of its brethren.

With the first of the light, some of the men

on the farm had set out to look for Gibbie, well knowing it would be a hard matter to touch Glashgar. About nine they returned, having found it impossible. One of them, caught in a current and swept into a hole, had barely escaped with his life. But they were unanimous that the dummie was better off in any cave on Glashgar than he would be in the best bed-room at the Mains, if things went on as they threatened.

Robert had kept going to the barn, and back again to the kitchen, all the morning, consumed with anxiety about the son of his old age; but the barn began to be flooded, and he had to limit his prayer-walk to the space between the door of the house and the chair where Janet sat—knitting busily, and praying with countenance untroubled, amidst the rush of the seaward torrents, the mad howling and screeching of the wind, and the lowing of the imprisoned cattle.

“O Lord,” she said in her great trusting heart, “gien my bonny man be droonin’ i’ the watter, or deein’ o’ cauld on the hill-side, haud ’s han’. Binna far frae him, O Lord; dinna lat him be fleyt.”

To Janet, what we call life and death were comparatively small matters, but she was very tender over suffering and fear. She did not pray half so much for Gibbie's life as for the presence with him of him who is at the death-bed of every sparrow. She went on waiting, and refused to be troubled. True, she was not his bodily mother, but she loved him far better than the mother who, in such a dread for her child, would have been mad with terror. The difference was, that Janet loved up as well as down, loved down so widely, so intensely, *because* the Lord of life, who gives his own to us, was more to her than any child can be to any mother, and she knew he could not forsake her Gibbie, and that his presence was more and better than life. She was unnatural, was she?—inhuman?—Yes, if there be no such heart and source of humanity as she believed in; if there be, then such calmness and courage and content as hers are the mere human and natural condition to be hungered after by every aspiring soul. Not until such condition is mine shall I be able to regard life as a godlike gift, except in the hope that it is drawing nigh. Let him who

understands, understand better; let him not say the good is less than perfect, or excuse his supineness and spiritual sloth by saying to himself that a man can go too far in his search after the divine, can sell too much of what he has to buy the field of the treasure. Either there is no Christ of God, or my all is his.

Robert seemed at length to have ceased his caged wandering. For a quarter of an hour he had been sitting with his face buried in his hands. Janet rose, went softly to him, and said in a whisper:

"Is Gibbie waur aff, Robert, i' this watter upo' Glashgar, nor the dissiples i' the boat upo' yon loch o' Galilee, an' the Maister no come to them? Robert, my ain man! dinna gar the Maister say to you, *O ye o' little faith!* *Wharfor did ye doobt?* Tak hert, man; the Maister wadna hae his men be cooards."

"Ye're richt, Janet; ye're aye richt," answered Robert, and rose.

She followed him into the passage.

"Whaur are ye gauin', Robert?" she said.

"I wuss I cud tell ye," he answered. "I'm jist hungerin' to be my lane. I wuss I had

never left Glashgar. There's aye room there. Or gien I cud win oot amo' the rigs! There's nane o' *them* left, but there's the rucks—they're no soomin' yet! I want to gang to the Lord, but I maunna weet Willie Mackay's claes."

"It's a sair peety," said Janet, "'at the men fowk disna learn to weyve stockin's, or dee something or ither wi' their han's. Mony's the time my stockin' 's been maist as guid's a cloaset to me, though I cudna jist gang intil't. But what maitters 't! A prayer i' the hert 's sure to fin' the ro'd oot. The hert's the last place 'at can haud ane in. A prayin' hert has nae reef (*roof*) till't."

She turned and left him. Comforted by her words, he followed her back into the kitchen, and sat down beside her.

"Gibbie 'ill be here mayhap whan least ye luik for him," said Janet.

Neither of them caught the wild eager gleam that lighted the face of the strange woman at those last words of Janet. She looked up at her with the sharpest of glances, but the same instant compelled her countenance to resume its former expression of fierce indifference, and

under that became watchful of everything said and done.

Still the rain fell, and the wind blew ; the torrents came tearing down from the hills, and shot madly into the rivers ; the rivers ran into the valleys, and deepened the lakes that filled them. On every side of the Mains, from the foot of Glashgar to Gormdhu, all was one yellow and red sea, with roaring currents and vortices numberless. It burrowed holes, it opened long-deserted channels and water-courses ; here it deposited inches of rich mould, there yards of sand and gravel ; here it was carrying away fertile ground, leaving behind only bare rock or shingle where the corn had been waving ; there it was scooping out the bed of a new lake. Many a thick soft lawn, of loveliest grass, dotted with fragrant shrubs and rare trees, vanished, and nothing was there when the waters subsided but a stony waste, or a gravelly precipice. Woods and copses were undermined, and trees and soil together swept into the vast : sometimes the very place was hardly there to say it knew its children no more. Houses were torn to pieces, and their contents, as from broken

boxes, sent wandering on the brown waste, through the grey air, to the discoloured sea, whose saltness for a long way out had vanished with its hue. Haymows were buried to the very top in sand; others went sailing bodily down the mighty stream—some of them followed or surrounded, like big ducks, by a great brood of ricks for their ducklings. Huge trees went past as if shot down an Alpine slide, cottages, and bridges of stone, giving way before them. Wooden mills, thatched roofs, great mill-wheels, went dipping and swaying and hobbling down. From the upper windows of the Mains, looking towards the chief current, they saw a drift of everything belonging to farms and dwelling-houses that would float. Chairs and tables, chests, carts, saddles, chests of drawers, tubs of linen, beds and blankets, work-benches, harrows, gurnels, planes, cheeses, churns, spinning-wheels, cradles, iron pots, wheel-barrows—all these and many other things hurried past as they gazed. Everybody was looking, and for a time all had been silent.

“Lord save us!” cried Mr. Duff, with a great start, and ran for his telescope.

A four-post bed came rocking down the river, now shooting straight for a short distance, now slowly wheeling, now shivering, struck by some swifter thing, now whirling giddily round in some vortex. The soaked curtains were flacking and flying in the great wind—and—yes, the telescope revealed it!—there *was* a figure in it!—dead or alive the farmer could not tell, but it lay still!—A cry burst from them all; but on swept the strange boat, bound for the world beyond the flood, and none could stay its course.

The water was now in stable and cow-houses and barn. A few minutes more and it would be creeping into the kitchen. The Daur and its tributary the Lorrie were about to merge their last difference on the floor of Jean's parlour. Worst of all, a rapid current had set in across the farther end of the stable, which no one had as yet observed.

Jean bustled about her work as usual, nor, although it was so much augmented, would accept help from any of her guests until it came to preparing dinner, when she allowed Janet and the foreman's wife to lend her a

hand. "The tramp-wife" she would not permit to touch plate or spoon, knife or potato. The woman rose in anger at her exclusion, and leaving the house waded to the barn. There she went up the ladder to the loft where she had slept, and threw herself on her straw-bed.

As there was no doing any work, Donal was out with two of the men, wading here and there where the water was not too deep, enjoying the wonder of the strange looks and curious conjunctions of things. None of them felt much of dismay at the havoc around them: beyond their chests with their Sunday clothes and at most two clean shirts, neither of the men had anything to lose worth mentioning; and for Donal, he would gladly have given even his books for such a *ploy*.

"There's ae thing, mither," he said, entering the kitchen, covered with mud, a rabbit in one hand and a large salmon in the other, "we're no like to sterve, wi' sawmon i' the hedges, an' mappies i' the trees!"

His master questioned him with no little incredulity. It was easy to believe in salmon anywhere, but rabbits in trees!

"I caught it i' the brainches o' a lairick (*larch*)," Donal answered, "easy enouch, for it cudna rin far, an' was mair fleyt at the watter nor at me; but for the sawmon, haith I was ower an' ower wi' hit i' the watter, efter I grup-pit it, er' I cud ca' 't my ain."

Before the flood subsided, not a few rabbits were caught in trees, mostly spruce-firs and larches. For salmon, they were taken everywhere—among grass, corn, and potatoes, in bushes, and hedges, and cottages. One was caught on a lawn with an umbrella; one was reported to have been found in a press-bed; another, coiled round in a pot hanging from the crook—ready to be boiled, only that he was alive and undressed.

Donal was still being cross-questioned by his master when the strange woman re-entered. Lying upon her straw, she had seen, through the fanlight over the stable-door, the swiftness of the current there passing, and understood the danger.

"I doobt," she said, addressing no one in partiicular, "the ga'le o' the stable winna stan' abune anither half-hoor."

"It maun fa' than," said the farmer, taking a pinch of snuff in hopeless serenity, and turning away.

"Hoots!" said the woman, "dinna speyk that gait, sir. It's no wice-like. Tak a dram, an' tak hert, an' dinna fling the calf efter the coo. Whaur's yer boatle, sir?"

John paid no heed to her suggestion, but Jean took it up.

"The boatle's whaur ye s' no lay han' upo' 't," she said.

"Weel, gien ye hae nae mercy upo' yer whusky, ye sud hae some upo' yer horse-beasts, ony gait," said the woman indignantly.

"What mean ye by that?" returned Jean, with hard voice, and eye of blame.

"Ye might at the least gie the puir things a chance," the woman rejoined.

"Hoo wad ye dee that?" said Jean. "Gien ye loused them they wad but tak to the watter wi' fear, an' droon the seener."

"Na, na, Jean," interposed the farmer, "they wad tak care o' themsel's to the last, an' aye haud to the dryest, jist as ye wad yersel'."

"Allooin'," said the stranger, replying to

Jean, yet speaking rather as if to herself, while she thought about something else, "I wad raither droon soomin' nor tied by the heid.—But what's the guid o' doctrine whaur there's onything to be dune?—Ye hae whaur to put them.—What kin' 's the fleers (*floors*) up the stair, sir?" she asked abruptly, turning full on her host, with a flash in her deep-set black eyes.

"Ow, guid dale fleers—what ither?" answered the farmer. "—It's the wa's, wuman, no the fleers we hae to be concernt about i' this wather."

"Gien the j'ists be strang, an' weel set intil the wa's, what for sudna ye tak the horse up the stair intil yer bedrooms? It'll be a' to the guid o' the wa's, for the weicht o' the beasts 'll be upo' them to haud them doon, an' the haill hoose again' the watter. An' gien I was you, I wad pit the best o' the kye an' the nowt intil the parlour an' the kitchen here. I'm thinkin' we'll lowse them a' else; for the byre wa's 'ill gang afore the hoose."

Mr. Duff broke into a strange laughter.

"Wad ye no tak up the carpets first, wuman?" he said.

“I wad,” she answered; “that gangs ohn speirt—*gien there was time*; but I tell ye there’s nane; an’ ye’ll buy twa or three carpets for the price o’ ae horse.”

“Haith! the wuman’s i’ the richt,” he cried, suddenly waking up to the sense of the proposal, and shot from the house.

All the women, Jean making no exception to any help now, rushed to carry the beds and blankets to the garret.

Just as Mr. Duff entered the stable from the nearer end, the opposite gable fell out with a great splash, letting in the wide level vision of turbidly raging waters, fading into the obscurity of the wind-driven rain. While he stared aghast, a great tree struck the wall like a battering ram, so that the stable shook. The horses, which had been for some time moving uneasily, were now quite scared. There was not a moment to be lost. Duff shouted for his men; one or two came running; and in less than a minute more those in the house heard the iron-shod feet splashing and stamping through the water, as one after another, the horses were brought across the yard to the door

of the house. Mr. Duff led by the halter his favourite Snowball, who was a good deal excited, plunging and rearing so that it was all he could do to hold him. He had ordered the men to take the others first, thinking he would follow more quietly. But the moment Snowball heard the first thundering of hoofs on the stair, he went out of his senses with terror, broke from his master, and went plunging back to the stable. Duff darted after him, but was only in time to see him rush from the further end into the swift current, where he was at once out of his depth, and was instantly caught and hurried, rolling over and over, from his master's sight. He ran back into the house, and up to the highest window. From that he caught sight of him a long way down, swimming. Once or twice he saw him turned heels over head—only to get his neck up again presently, and swim as well as before. But alas! it was in the direction of the Daur, which would soon, his master did not doubt, sweep his carcase into the North Sea. With troubled heart he strained his sight after him as long as he could distinguish his lessening head, but it got

amongst some wreck, and unable to tell any more whether he saw it or not, he returned to his men with his eyes full of tears.

CHAPTER XII.

GLASHRUACH.

AS soon as Gibbie had found a stall for Crummie, and thrown a great dinner before her, he turned and sped back the way he had come: there was no time to lose if he would have the bridge to cross the Lorrie by; and his was indeed the last foot that ever touched it. Guiding himself by well-known points yet salient, for he knew the country perhaps better than any man born and bred in it, he made straight for Glashgar, itself hid in the rain. Now wading, now swimming, now walking along the top of a wall, now caught and baffled in a hedge, Gibbie held stoutly on. Again and again he got into a current, and was swept from his direction, but he soon made his lee way good, and at length, clear of the level

water, and with only the torrents to mind, seated himself on a stone under a rock a little way up the mountain. There he drew from his pocket the putty-like mass to which the water had reduced the cakes with which it was filled, and ate it gladly, eyeing from his shelter the slanting lines of the rain, and the rushing sea from which he had just emerged. So lost was the land beneath the water, that he had to think to be certain under which of the roofs, looking like so many foundered Noah's arks, he had left his father and mother. Ah! yonder were cattle!—a score of heads, listlessly drifting down, all the swim out of them, their long horns, like bits of dry branches, knocking together! There was a pig, and there another! And, alas! yonder floated half a dozen helpless sponges of sheep!

At sight of these last he started to his feet, and set off up the hill. It was not so hard a struggle as to cross the water, but he had still to get to the other side of several torrents far more dangerous than any current he had been in. Again and again he had to ascend a long distance before he found a possible

place to cross at; but he reached the fold at last.

It was in a little valley opening on that where lay the tarn. Swollen to a lake, the waters of it were now at the very gate of the pen. For a moment he regretted he had not brought Oscar, but the next he saw that not much could with any help have been done for the sheep, beyond what they could, if at liberty, do for themselves. Left where they were they would probably be drowned; if not they would be starved; but if he let them go, they would keep out of the water, and find for themselves what food and shelter were to be had. He opened the gate, drove them out, and a little way up the hill, and left them.

By this time it was about two o'clock, and Gibbie was very hungry. He had had enough of the water for one day, however, and was not inclined to return to the Mains. Where could he get something to eat? If the cottage were still standing—and it might be—he would find plenty there. He turned towards it. Great was his pleasure when, after another long struggle, he perceived that not only was the cottage there, but the torrent gone: either the flow

from the mountain had ceased, or the course of the water had been diverted. When he reached the Glashburn, which lay between him and the cottage, he saw that the torrent had found its way into it, probably along with others of the same brood, for it was frightfully swollen, and went shooting down to Glashruach like one long cataract. He had to go a great way up before he could cross it.

When at length he reached home, he discovered that the overshooting stream must have turned aside very soon after they left, for the place was not much worse than then. He swept out the water that lay on the floor, took the driest peats he could find, succeeded with the tinder-box and sulphur-match at the first attempt, lighted a large fire, and made himself some water-brose—which is not only the most easily cooked of dishes, but is as good as any for a youth of capacity for strong food.

His hunger appeased, he sat resting in Robert's chair, gradually drying; and falling asleep, slept for an hour or so. When he woke, he took his New Testament from the *crap o' the wa'*, and began to read.

Of late he had made a few attempts upon one and another of the epistles, but, not understanding what he read, had not found profit, and was on the point of turning finally from them for the present, when his eye falling on some of the words of St. John, his attention was at once caught, and he had soon satisfied himself, to his wonder and gladness, that his first epistle was no sealed book any more than his gospel. To the third chapter of that epistle he now turned, and read until he came to these words: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

"What learned him that?" said Gibbie to himself; Janet had taught him to search the teaching of the apostles for what the Master had taught them. He thought and thought, and at last remembered "This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you."

"And here am I," said Gibbie to himself, "sittin' here in idelseat, wi' my fire, an' my brose, an' my bible, and a' the warl' aneath Glashgar lyin' in a speat (*flood*)! I canna lay doon my life to save their sows; I maun save

for them what I can—it may be but a hen or a calf. I maun dee the warks o' him 'at sent me—he's aye savin' at men."

The bible was back in its place, and Gibbie out of the door the same moment. He had not an idea what he was going to do. All he yet understood was, that he must go down the hill, to be where things might have to be done—and that before the darkness fell. He must go where there were people. As he went his heart was full of joy, as if he had already achieved some deliverance. Down the hill he went singing and dancing. If mere battle with storm was a delight to the boy, what would not a mortal tussle with the elements for the love of men be? The thought itself was a heavenly felicity, and made him "happy as a lover."

His first definitely directive thought was, that his nearest neighbours were likely enough to be in trouble—"the fowk at the muckle hoose." He would go thither straight.

Glashruach, as I have already said, stood on one of the roots of Glashgar, where the mountain settles down into the valley of the Daur. Immediately outside its principal gate ran the

Glashburn; on the other side of the house, within the grounds, ran a smaller hill-stream, already mentioned as passing close under Ginevra's window. Both these fell into the Lorrie. Between them the mountain sloped gently up for some little distance, clothed with forest. On the side of the smaller burn, however, the side opposite the house, the ground rose abruptly. There also grew firs, but the soil was shallow, with rock immediately below, and they had not come to much. Straight from the mountain, between the two streams, Gibbie approached the house, through larches and pines, raving and roaring in the wind. As he drew nearer, and saw how high the house stood above the valley and its waters, he began to think he had been foolish in coming there to find work; but when he reached a certain point whence the approach from the gate was visible, he started, stopped, and stared. He rubbed his eyes. No; he was not asleep and dreaming by the cottage fire; the wind was about him, and the firs were howling and hissing; there was the cloudy mountain, with the Glashburn, fifty times its usual size, darting like brown light-

ning from it ; but where was the iron gate with its two stone pillars, crested with wolf's-heads ? where was the bridge ? where was the wall, and the gravelled road to the house ? Had he mistaken his bearings ? was he looking in a wrong direction ? Below him was a wide, swift, fiercely rushing river, where water was none before ! No ; he made no mistake : there was the rest of the road, the end of it next the house ! That was a great piece of it that fell frothing into the river and vanished ! Bridge and gate and wall were gone utterly. The burn had swallowed them, and now, foaming with madness, was roaring along, a great way within the grounds, and rapidly drawing nearer to the house, tearing to pieces and devouring all that defended it. There ! what a mouthful of the shrubbery it gobbled up ! Slowly, graciously, the tall trees bowed their heads and sank into the torrent, but the moment they touched it, shot away like arrows. Would the foundations of the house outstand it ? Were they as strong as the walls of Babylon, yet if the water undermined them, down they must ! Did the laird know that the enemy was within his gates ? Not with all he had that day

seen and gone through, had Gibbie until now gathered any notion of the force of rushing water.

Rousing himself from his bewildered amazement, he darted down the hill. If the other burn was behaving in like fashion, then indeed the fate of the house was sealed. But no; huge and wild as that was also, it was not able to tear down its banks of rock. From that side the house did not seem in danger.

Mr. Galbraith had gone again, leaving Ginevra to the care of Mistress Mac Farlane, with a strict order to both, and full authority to the latter to enforce it, that she should not set foot across the threshold on any pretext, or on the smallest expedition, without the housekeeper's attendance. He must take Joseph with him, he said, as he was going to the Duke's, but she could send for Angus upon any emergency.

The laird had of late been so little at home, that the establishment had been much reduced; Mistress Mac Farlane did most of the cooking herself; had quarrelled with the housemaid and not yet got another; and, Nicie dismissed, and the kitchen maid gone to visit her mother, was

left alone in the house with her mistress, if such we can call her who was really her prisoner. At this moment, however, she was not alone, for on the other side of the fire sat Angus, not thither attracted by any friendship for the housekeeper, but by the glass of whisky of which he sipped as he talked. Many a flood had Angus seen, and some that had done frightful damage, but never one that had caused him anxiety; and although this was worse than any of the rest, he had not yet a notion how bad it really was. For, as there was nothing to be done out of doors, and he was not fond of being idle, he had been busy all the morning in the woodhouse, sawing and splitting for the winter-store, and working the better that he knew what honorarium awaited his appearance in the kitchen. In the woodhouse he only heard the wind and the rain and the roar, he saw nothing of the flood; when he entered the kitchen, it was by the back door, and he sat there without the smallest suspicion of what was going on in front.

Ginevra had had no companion since Nicie left her, and her days had been very dreary,

but this day had been the dreariest in her life. Mistress Mac Farlane made herself so disagreeable that she kept away from her as much as she could, spending most of her time in her own room, with her needlework and some books of poetry she had found in the library. But the poetry had turned out very dull—not at all like what Donal read, and throwing one of them aside for the tenth time that day, she wandered listlessly to the window, and stood there gazing out on the wild confusion—the burn roaring below, the trees opposite ready to be torn to pieces by the wind, and the valley beneath covered with stormy water. The tumult was so loud, that she did not hear a gentle knock at her door: as she turned away, weary of everything, she saw it softly open—and there to her astonishment stood Gibbie—come, she imagined, to seek shelter, because their cottage had been blown down.—Calculating the position of her room from what he knew of its windows, he had, with the experienced judgment of a mountaineer, gone to it almost direct.

“You mustn’t come here, Gibbie,” she said, advancing. “Go down to the kitchen, to

Mistress MacFarlane. She will see to what you want."

Gibbie made eager signs to her to go with him. She concluded that he wanted her to accompany him to the kitchen and speak for him; but knowing that would only enrage her keeper with them both, she shook her head, and went back to the window. She thought, as she approached it, there seemed a lull in the storm, but the moment she looked out, she gave a cry of astonishment, and stood staring. Gibbie had followed her as softly as swiftly, and looking out also, saw good cause indeed for her astonishment: the channel of the raging burn was all but dry! Instantly he understood what it meant. In his impotence to persuade, he caught the girl in his arms, and rushed with her from the room. She had faith enough in him by this time not to struggle or scream. He shot down the stair with her, and out of the front door. Her weight was nothing to his excited strength. The moment they issued, and she saw the Glashburn raving along through the lawn, with little more than the breadth of the drive between it and the house, she saw the

necessity of escape, though she did not perceive half the dire necessity for haste. Every few moments, a great gush would dash out twelve or fifteen yards over the gravel and sink again, carrying many feet of the bank with it, and widening by so much the raging channel.

"Put me down, Gibbie," she said; "I will run as fast as you like."

He obeyed at once.

"Oh!" she cried, "Mistress Mac Farlane!—I wonder if she knows. Run and knock at the kitchen window."

Gibbie darted off, gave three loud hurried taps on the window, came flying back, took Ginevra's hand in his, drew her on till she was at her full speed, turned sharp to the left round the corner of the house, and shot down to the empty channel of the burn. As they crossed it, even to the inexperienced eyes of the girl it was plain what had caused the phenomenon. A short distance up the stream, the whole facing of its lofty right bank had slipped down into its channel. Not a tree, not a shrub, not a bed of moss was to be seen; all was bare wet rock. A confused heap of mould, with branches and

roots sticking out of it in all directions, lay at its foot, closing the view upward. The other side of the heap was beaten by the raging burn. They could hear, though they could not see it. Any moment the barrier might give way, and the water resume its course. They made haste, therefore, to climb the opposite bank. In places it was very steep, and the soil slipped so that often it seemed on its way with them to the bottom, while the wind threatened to uproot the trees to which they clung, and carry them off through the air. It was with a fierce scramble they gained the top. Then the sight was a grand one. The arrested water swirled and beat and foamed against the landslip, then rushed to the left, through the wood, over bushes and stones, a raging river, the wind tearing off the tops of its waves, to the Glashburn, into which it plunged, swelling yet higher its huge volume. Rapidly it cut for itself a new channel. Every moment a tree fell and shot with it like a rocket. Looking up its course, they saw it come down the hillside a white streak, and burst into boiling brown and roar at their feet. The wind nearly swept them from their place ;

but they clung to the great stones, and saw the airy torrent, as if emulating that below it, fill itself with branches and leaves and lumps of foam. Then first Ginevra became fully aware of the danger in which the house was, and from which Gibbie had rescued her. Augmented in volume and rapidity by the junction of its neighbour, the Glashburn was now within a yard—so it seemed from that height at least—of the door. But they must not linger. The nearest accessible shelter was the cottage, and Gibbie knew it would need all Ginevra's strength to reach it. Again he took her by the hand.

“But where's Mistress Mac Farlane?” she said. “Oh, Gibbie! we mustn't leave her.”

He replied by pointing down to the bed of the stream: there were she and Angus crossing. Ginevra was satisfied when she saw the gamekeeper with her, and they set out, as fast as they could go, ascending the mountain, Gibbie eager to have her in warmth and safety before it was dark.

Both burns were now between them and the cottage, which greatly added to their difficult-

ies. The smaller burn came from the tarn, and round that they must go, else Ginevra would never get to the other side of it; and then there was the Glashburn to cross. It was an undertaking hard for any girl, especially such for one unaccustomed to exertion; and what made it far worse was that she had only house-shoes, which were continually coming off as she climbed. But the excitement of battling with the storm, the joy of adventure, and the pleasure of feeling her own strength, sustained her well for a long time; and in such wind and rain, the absence of bonnet and cloak was an advantage, so long as exertion kept her warm. Gibbie did his best to tie her shoes on with strips of her pocket handkerchief; but when at last they were of no more use, he pulled off his corduroy jacket, tore out the sleeves, and with strips from the back tied them about her feet and ankles. Her hair also was a trouble: it would keep blowing in her eyes, and in Gibbie's too, and that sometimes with quite a sharp lash. But she never lost her courage, and Gibbie, though he could not hearten her with words, was so ready with smile and laugh, was

so cheerful—even merry, so fearless, so free from doubt and anxiety, while doing everything he could think of to lessen her toil and pain, that she hardly felt in his silence any lack; while often, to rest her body, and withdraw her mind from her sufferings, he made her stop and look back on the strange scene behind them. It was getting dark when they reached the only spot where he judged it possible to cross the Glashburn. He carried her over, and then it was all down hill to the cottage. Once inside it, Ginevra threw herself into Robert's chair, and laughed, and cried, and laughed again. Gibbie blew up the peats, made a good fire, and put on water to boil; then opened Janet's drawers, and having signified to his companion to take what she could find, went to the cow house, threw himself on a heap of wet straw, worn out, and had enough to do to keep himself from falling asleep. A little rested, he rose and re-entered the cottage, when a merry laugh from both of them went ringing out into the storm: the little lady was dressed in Janet's workday garments, and making porridge. She looked very funny. Gibbie found plenty of

milk in the dairy under the rock, and they ate their supper together in gladness. Then Gibbie prepared the bed in the little closet for his guest, and she slept as if she had not slept for a week.

Gibbie woke with the first of the dawn. The rain still fell—descending in spoonfuls rather than drops; the wind kept shaping itself into long hopeless howls, rising to shrill yells that went drifting away over the land; and then the howling rose again. Nature seemed in despair. There must be more for Gibbie to do! He must go again to the foot of the mountain, and see if there was anybody to help. They might even be in trouble at the Mains, who could tell!

Ginevra woke, rose, made herself as tidy as she could, and left her closet. Gibbie was not in the cottage. She blew up the fire, and, finding the pot ready beside it, with clean water, set it on to boil. Gibbie did not come. The water boiled. She took it off, but being hungry, put it on again. Several times she took it off and put it on again. Gibbie never came. She made herself some porridge at last. Everything necessary was upon the table, and as she

poured it into the wooden dish for the purpose, she took notice of a slate beside it, with something written upon it. The words were, "I will cum back as soon as I cann."

She was alone, then ! It was dreadful ; but she was too hungry to think about it. She ate her porridge, and then began to cry. It was very unkind of Gibbie to leave her, she said to herself. But then he was a sort of angel, and doubtless had to go and help somebody else. There was a little pile of books on the table, which he must have left for her. She began examining them, and soon found something to interest her, so that an hour or two passed quickly. But Gibbie did not return, and the day went wearily. She cried now and then, made great efforts to be patient, succeeded pretty well for a while, and cried again. She read and grew tired a dozen times ; ate cakes and milk, cried afresh, and ate again. Still Gibbie did not come. Before the day was over, she had had a good lesson in praying. For here she was, one who had never yet acted on her own responsibility, alone on a bare mountain-side, in the heart of a storm which seemed

as if it would never cease, and not a creature knew where she was but the dumb boy, and he had left her! If he should never come back, what would become of her? She could not find her way down the mountain; and if she could, where was she to go, with all Daurside under water? She would soon have eaten up all the food in the cottage, and the storm might go on for ever, who could tell? Or who could tell whether, when it was over, and she got down to the valley below, she should not find it a lifeless desert, everybody drowned, and herself the only person left alive in the world?

Then the noises were terrible. She seemed to inhabit noise. Through the general roar of wind and water and rain, every now and then came a sharper sound, like a report or crack, followed by a strange low thunder, as it seemed. They were the noises of stones carried down by the streams, grinding against each other, and dashed stone against stone; and of rocks falling and rolling, and bounding against their fast rooted neighbours. When it began to grow dark, her misery seemed more than she could

bear ; but then, happily, she grew sleepy, and slept the darkness away.

With the new light came new promise and fresh hope. What should we poor humans do without our God's nights and mornings? Our ills are all easier to help than we know—except the one ill of a central self, which God himself finds it hard to help.—It no longer rained so fiercely ; the wind had fallen ; and the streams did not run so furious a race down the sides of the mountain. She ran to the burn, got some water to wash herself—she could not spare the clear water, of which there was some still left in Janet's pails—and put on her own clothes, which were now quite dry. Then she got herself some breakfast, and after that tried to say her prayers, but found it very difficult, for, do what she might to model her slippery thoughts, she could not help, as often as she turned herself towards him, seeing God like her father, the laird.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WHELP.

GIBBIE sped down the hill through a worse rain than ever. The morning was close, and the vapours that filled it were like smoke burned to the hue of the flames whence it issued. Many a man that morning believed another great deluge begun, and all measures relating to things of this world lost labour. Going down his own side of the Glashburn, the nearest path to the valley, the gamekeeper's cottage was the first dwelling on his way. It stood a little distance from the bank of the burn, opposite the bridge and gate, while such things were.

It had been with great difficulty, for even Angus did not know the mountain so well as Gibbie, that the gamekeeper reached it with

the housekeeper the night before. It was within two gunshots of the house of Glashruach, yet to get to it they had to walk miles up and down Glashgar. A mountain in storm is as hard to cross as a sea. Arrived, they did not therefore feel safe. The tendency of the Glashburn was indeed away from the cottage, as the grounds of Glashruach sadly witnessed; but a torrent is double-edged, and who could tell? The yielding of one stone in its channel might send it to them. All night Angus watched, peering out ever again into the darkness, but seeing nothing save three lights that burned above the water—one of them, he thought, at the Mains. The other two went out in the darkness, but that only in the dawn. When the morning came, there was the Glashburn meeting the Lorrie in his garden. But the cottage was well built, and fit to stand a good siege, while any moment the waters might have reached their height. By breakfast time, however, they were round it from behind. There is nothing like a flood for revealing the variations of surface, the dips and swells of a country. In a few minutes they were isolated,

tree. He got into the middle of it, and there remained trembling, the weak branches breaking with every motion he made, while the stream worked at the roots, and the wind laid hold of him with fierce leverage. In terror, seeming still to sink as he sat, he watched the trees dart by like battering rams in the swiftest of the current: the least of them diverging would tear the elder tree with it. Brave enough in dealing with poachers, Angus was not the man to gaze with composure in the face of a sure slow death, against which no assault could be made. Many a man is courageous because he has not conscience enough to make a coward of him, but Angus had not quite reached that condition, and from the branches of the elder tree showed a pale, terror-stricken visage. Amidst the many objects on the face of the water, Gibbie, however, did not distinguish it, and plunging in swam round to the front of the cottage to learn what was the matter. There the wife's gesticulations directed his eyes to her drowning husband.

But what was he to do? He could swim to the tree well enough, and, he thought, back again,

Angus threw down everything with an ugly oath, for he had given strict orders not one of the children should handle the whelp, jumped up, and got out on the roof. From there he might have managed to reach it, so high now was the water, had the little thing remained where it fell, but already it had swum a yard or two from the house. Angus, who was a fair swimmer and an angry man, threw off his coat, and plunged after it, greatly to the delight of the little one, caught the pup with his teeth by the back of the neck, and turned to make for the house. Just then a shrub, swept from the hill, caught him in the face, and so bewildered him, that, before he got rid of it, he had blundered into the edge of the current, which seized and bore him rapidly away. He dropped the pup, and struck out for home with all his strength. But he soon found the most he could do was to keep his head above water, and gave himself up for lost. His wife screamed in agony. Gibbie heard her as he came down the hill, and ran at full speed towards the cottage.

About a hundred yards from the house, the current bore Angus straight into a large elder

away to the side with a hold of the rope, was swimming his hardest to draw him out of the current. But a weary man was Angus, when at length he reached the house. It was all he could do to get himself in at the window, and crawl up the stair. At the top of it he fell benumbed on the floor.

By the time that, repentant and grateful, Mistress Mac Pholp bethought herself of Gibbie, not a trace of him was to be seen; and Angus, contemplating his present experience in connection with that of Robert Grant's cottage, came to the conclusion that he must be an emissary of Satan who on two such occasions had so unexpectedly rescued him. Perhaps the idea was not quite so illogical as it must seem; for how should such a man imagine any other sort of messenger taking an interest in his life? He was confirmed in the notion when he found that a yard of the line remained attached to the grate, but the rest of it with the anker was gone—fit bark for the angel he imagined Gibbie, to ride the stormy waters withal. While they looked for him in the water and on the land, Gibbie was again in the room below, carrying

out a fresh thought. With the help of the table, he emptied the cask, into which a good deal of water had got. Then he took out the stick, corked the bung-hole tight, laced the cask up in a piece of net, attached the line to the net, and wound it about the cask by rolling the latter round and round, took the cask between his hands, and pushed from the window straight into the current of the Glashburn. In a moment it had swept him to the Lorrie. By the greater rapidity of the former he got easily across the heavier current of the latter, and was presently in water comparatively still, swimming quietly towards the Mains, and enjoying his trip none the less that he had to keep a sharp look out: if he should have to dive, to avoid any drifting object, he might lose his barrel. Quickly now, had he been so minded, he could have returned to the city—changing vessel for vessel, as one after another went to pieces. Many a house-roof offered itself for the voyage; now and then a great water-wheel, horizontal and helpless, devoured of its element. Once he saw a cradle come gyrating along, and, urging all his might,

a human being. He was quite bowed and submissive, and Gibbie at once set about his rescue. He had reasoned as he came along that, if there were beasts at the Mains, there must be room for Snowball, and thither he would endeavour to take him. He tied the end of the line to the remnant of the halter on his head, the other end being still fast to the barrel, and took to the water again. Encouraged by the power upon his head, the pressure, namely, of the halter, the horse followed, and they made for the Mains. It was a long journey, and Gibbie had not breath enough to sing to Snowball, but he made what noises he could, and they got slowly along. He found the difficulties far greater now that he had to look out for the horse as well as for himself. None but one much used to the water could have succeeded in the attempt, or could indeed have stood out against its weakening influence and the strain of the continued exertion together so long. At length his barrel got water-logged, and he sent it adrift.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BRANDER.

MISTRESS CROALE was not, after all, the last who arrived at the Mains. But that the next arrival was accounted for, scarcely rendered it less marvellous than hers.—Just after the loss of Snowball, came floating into the farmyard, over the top of the gate, with such astonishment of all who beheld that each seemed to place more confidence in his neighbour's eyes than in his own, a woman on a raft, with her four little children seated around her, holding the skirt of her gown above her head and out between her hands for a sail. She had made the raft herself, by tying some bars of a paling together, and crossing them with what other bits of wood she could find—a *brander* she called it, which is Scotch for a gridiron,

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But what was he to do? He could swim to the tree well enough, and, he thought, back again,

but how was that to be made of service to Angus? He could not save him by main force—there was not enough of that between them. If he had a line, and there must be plenty of lines in the cottage, he could carry him the end of it to haul upon—that would do. If he could send it to him that would be better still, for then he could help at the other end, and would be in the right position, up stream, to help farther, if necessary, for down the current alone was the path of communication open. He caught hold of the eaves, and scrambled on to the roof. But in the folly and faithlessness of her despair, the woman would not let him enter. With a curse caught from her husband, she struck him from the window, crying,

“Ye s’ no come in here, an’ my man droonin’ yon’er! Gang till ’im, ye cooard!”

Never had poor Gibbie so much missed the use of speech. On the slope of the roof he could do little to force an entrance, therefore threw himself off it to seek another, and betook himself to the windows below. Through that of Angus’s room, he caught sight of a floating anker cask. It was the very thing!—and there on

the walls hung a quantity of nets and cordage! But how to get in? It was a sash-window, and of course swollen with the wet, therefore not to be opened; and there was not a square in it large enough to let him through. He swam to the other side, and crept softly on to the roof, and over the ridge. But a broken slate betrayed him. The woman saw him, rushed to the fire-place, caught up the poker, and darted back to defend the window.

“Ye s’ no come in here, I tell ye,” she screeched, “an’ my man stickin’ i’ yon boortree buss!”

Gibbie advanced. She made a blow at him with the poker. He caught it, wrenched it from her grasp, and threw himself from the roof. The next moment they heard the poker at work, smashing the window.

“He’ll be in an’ murder’s a’!” cried the mother, and ran to the stair, while the children screamed and danced with terror.

But the water was far too deep for her. She returned to the attic, barricaded the door, and went again to the window to watch her drowning husband.

Gibbie was inside in a moment, and seizing the

cask, proceeded to attach to it a strong line. He broke a bit from a fishing-rod, secured the line round the middle of it with a notch, put the stick through the bunghole in the bilge, and corked up the hole with a net-float. Happily he had a knife in his pocket. He then joined strong lines together until he thought he had length enough, secured the last end to a bar of the grate, and knocked out both sashes of the window with an axe. A passage thus cleared, he floated out first a chair, then a creepie, and one thing after another, to learn from what point to start the barrel. Seeing and recognizing them from above, Mistress Mac Pholp raised a terrible outcry. In the very presence of her drowning husband, such a wanton dissipation of her property roused her to fiercest wrath, for she imagined Gibbie was emptying her house with leisurely revenge. Satisfied at length, he floated out his barrel, and followed with the line in his hand, to aid its direction if necessary. It struck the tree. With a yell of joy Angus laid hold of it, and hauling the line taut, and feeling it secure, committed himself at once to the water, holding by the barrel, and swimming with his legs, while Gibbie,

away to the side with a hold of the rope, was swimming his hardest to draw him out of the current. But a weary man was Angus, when at length he reached the house. It was all he could do to get himself in at the window, and crawl up the stair. At the top of it he fell benumbed on the floor.

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intercepted it, but hardly knew whether he was more sorry or relieved to find it empty. When he was about half-way to the Mains, a whole fleet of ricks bore down upon him. He boarded one, and scrambled to the top of it, keeping fast hold of the end of his line, which unrolled from the barrel as he ascended. From its peak he surveyed the wild scene. All was running water. Not a human being was visible, and but a few house-roofs, of which for a moment it was hard to say whether or not they were of those that were afloat. Here and there were the tops of trees, showing like low bushes. Nothing was uplifted except the mountains. He drew near the Mains. All the ricks in the yard were bobbing about, as if amusing themselves with a slow contradance; but they were as yet kept in by the barn, and a huge old hedge of hawthorn. What was that cry from far away? Surely it was that of a horse in danger! It brought a lusty equine response from the farm. Where could horses be with such a depth of water about the place? Then began a great lowing of cattle. But again came the cry of the horse from afar, and

Gibbie, this time recognizing the voice as Snowball's, forgot the rest. He stood up on the very top of the rick, and sent his keen glance round on all sides. The cry came again and again, so that he was soon satisfied in what direction he must look. The rain had abated a little, but the air was so thick with vapour that he could not tell whether it was really an object he seemed to see white against the brown water, far away to the left, or a fancy of his excited hope : it *might* be Snowball on the turn-pike road, which thereabout ran along the top of a high embankment. He tumbled from the rick, rolled the line about the barrel, and pushed vigorously for what might be the horse.

It took him a weary hour—in so many currents was he caught, one after the other, all straining to carry him far below the object he wanted to reach : an object it plainly was before he had got half-way across, and by and by as plainly it was Snowball—testified to ears and eyes together. When at length he scrambled on the embankment beside him, the poor, shivering, perishing creature gave a low neigh of delight : he did not know Gibbie, but he was

a human being. He was quite cowed and submissive, and Gibbie at once set about his rescue. He had reasoned as he came along that, if there were beasts at the Mains, there must be room for Snowball, and thither he would endeavour to take him. He tied the end of the line to the remnant of the halter on his head, the other end being still fast to the barrel, and took to the water again. Encouraged by the power upon his head, the pressure, namely, of the halter, the horse followed, and they made for the Mains. It was a long journey, and Gibbie had not breath enough to sing to Snowball, but he made what noises he could, and they got slowly along. He found the difficulties far greater now that he had to look out for the horse as well as for himself. None but one much used to the water could have succeeded in the attempt, or could indeed have stood out against its weakening influence and the strain of the continued exertion together so long. At length his barrel got water-logged, and he sent it adrift.

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and thence for a grating. Nobody knew her. She had come down the Lorrie. The farmer was so struck with admiration of her invention, daring, and success, that he vowed he would keep the brander as long as it would stick together; and as it could not be taken into the house, he secured it with a rope to one of the windows.

When they had the horses safe on the first floor, they brought the cattle into the lower rooms; but it became evident that if they were to have a chance, they also must be got up to the same level. Thereupon followed a greater tumult than before—such a banging of heads and hind quarters, of horns and shoulders, against walls and partitions, such a rushing and thundering, that the house seemed in more danger from within than from without; for the cattle were worse to manage than the horses, and one moment stubborn as a milestone, would the next moment start into a frantic rush. One poor wretch broke both her horns clean off against the wall, at a sharp turn of the passage; and after two or three more accidents, partly caused by over haste in the human mortals,

Donal begged that the business should be left to him and his mother. His master consented, and it was wonderful what Janet contrived to effect by gentleness, coaxing, and suggestion. When Hornie's turn came, Donal began to tie ropes to her hind hoofs. Mr. Duff objected.

"Ye dinna ken her sae weel as I dee, sir," answered Donal. "She wad caw her horns intil a man-o'-war 'at angert her. An' up yon'er ye cudna get a whack at her, for hurtin' ane 'at didna deserve 't. I s' dee her no mischeef, I s' warran'. Ye jist lea' her to me, sir."

His master yielded. Donal tied a piece of rope round each hind pastern—if cows have pasterns—and made a loop at the end. The moment she was at the top of the stair, he and his mother dropped each a loop over a horn.

"Noo, she'll naither stick nor fling (*gore nor kick*)," said Donal: she could but bellow, and paw with her fore-feet.

The strangers were mostly in Fergus's bedroom; the horses were all in their owner's; and the cattle were in the remaining rooms. Bursts of talk amongst the women were followed by fits of silence: who could tell how long the

flood might last!—or indeed whether the house might not be undermined before morning, or be struck by one of those big things of which so many floated by, and give way with one terrible crash! Mr. Duff, while preserving a tolerably calm exterior, was nearly at his wits' end. He would stand for half an hour together, with his hands in his pockets, looking motionless out of a window, murmuring now and then to himself, "This is clean ridic'lous!" But when anything had to be done he was active enough. Mistress Croale sat in a corner, very quiet, and looking not a little cowed. There was altogether more water than she liked. Now and then she lifted her lurid black eyes to Janet, who stood at one of the windows, knitting away at her master's stocking, and casting many a calm glauce at the brown waters and the strange drift that covered them; but if Janet turned her head and made a remark to her, she never gave back other than curt if not rude reply. In the afternoon Jean brought the whisky bottle. At sight of it, Mistress Croale's eyes shot flame. Jean poured out a glassful, took a sip, and offered it to Janet. Janet de-

clining it, Jean, invaded possibly by some pity of her miserable aspect, offered it to Mistress Croale. She took it with affected coolness, tossed it off at a gulp, and presented the glass—not to the hand from which she had taken it, but to Jean's other hand, in which was the bottle. Jean cast a piercing look into her greedy eyes, and taking the glass from her, filled it, and presented it to the woman who had built and navigated the brander. Mistress Croale muttered something that sounded like a curse upon *scrimp* measure, and drew herself farther back into the corner, where she had seated herself on Fergus's portmanteau.

"I doobt we hae an Ahchan i' the camp—a Jonah intil the ship!" said Jean to Janet, as she turned, bottle and glass in her hands, to carry them from the room.

"Na, na; naither sae guid nor sae ill," replied Janet. "Fowk 'at's been ill-guidit, no kennin' whaur their help lies, whiles taks to the boatle. But this is but a day o' punishment, no a day o' judgment yet, an' I'm thinkin' the warst's near han' ower.—Gien only Gibbie war here!"

Jean left the room, shaking her head, and Janet stood alone at the window as before. A hand was laid on her arm. She looked up. The black eyes were close to hers, and the glow that was in them gave the lie to the tone of indifference with which Mistress Croale spoke.

"Ye hae mair nor ance made mention o' ane connectit wi' ye, by the name o' Gibbie," she said.

"Ay," answered Janet, sending for the serpent to aid the dove; "an' what may be yer wull wi' him?"

"Ow, naething," returned Mistress Croale. "I kenned ane o' the name lang syne 'at was lost sicht o'."

"There's Gibbies here an' Gibbies there," remarked Janet, probing her.

"Weel I wat!" she answered peevishly, for she had had whisky enough only to make her cross, and turned away, muttering however in an undertone, but not too low for Janet to hear, "but there's nae mony wee Sir Gibbies, or the warl' wadna be sae dooms like hell."

Janet was arrested in her turn: could the fierce, repellent, whisky-craving woman be the

mother of her gracious Gibbie? Could she be, and look so lost? But the loss of him had lost her perhaps. Anyhow God was his father, whoever was the mother of him.

“Hoo cam ye to tyne yer bairn, wuman?” she asked.

But Mistress Croale was careful also, and had her reasons.

“He ran frae the bluidy han’,” she said enigmatically.

Janet recalled how Gibbie came to her, scored by the hand of cruelty. Were there always innocents in the world, who in their own persons, by the will of God, unknown to themselves, carried on the work of Christ, filling up that which was left behind of the sufferings of their Master—women, children, infants, idiots—creatures of sufferance, with souls open to the world to receive wrong, that it might pass and cease? little furnaces they, of the consuming fire, to swallow up and destroy by uncomplaining endurance—the divine destruction!

“Hoo cam he by the bonnie nickname?” she asked at length.

“Nickname!” retorted Mistress Croale fierce-

ly; "I think I hear ye! His ain name an' teetle by law an' richt, as sure's ever there was a King Jeames 'at first pat his han' to the makin' o' baronets!—as it's aften I hae h'ard Sir George, the father o' 'im, tell the same."

She ceased abruptly, annoyed with herself, as it seemed, for having said so much.

"Ye wadna be my lady yersel', wad ye, mem?" suggested Janet in her gentlest voice.

Mistress Croale made her no answer. Perhaps she thought of the days when she alone of women did the simplest of woman's offices for Sir George. Anyhow, it was one thing to rush of herself to the verge of her secret, and quite another to be fooled over it.

"Is't lang sin' ye lost him?" asked Janet, after a bootless pause.

"Ay," she answered, gruffly and discourteously, in a tone intended to quench interrogation.

But Janet persisted.

"Wad ye ken 'im again gien ye saw 'im?"

"Ken 'im? I wad ken 'im gien he had grown a gran'father. Ken 'im, quo' she! Wha ever kenned 'im as I did, bairn 'at he was, an' wadna

ken 'im gien he war deid an' an angel made o' 'im!—But weel I wat, it's little differ that wad mak!"

She rose in her excitement, and going to the other window, stood gazing vacantly out upon the rushing sea. To Janet it was plain she knew more about Gibbie than she was inclined to tell, and it gave her a momentary sting of apprehension.

"What was about him ye wad ken sae weel?" she asked in a tone of indifference, as if speaking only through the meshes of her work.

"I'll ken them 'at speirs afore I tell," she replied sullenly.—But the next instant she screamed aloud, "Lord God Almighty! yon's *him!* yon's himsel'!" and, stretching out her arms, dashed a hand through a pane, letting in an eddying swirl of wind and water, while the blood streamed unheeded from her wrist.

The same moment Jean entered the room. She heard both the cry and the sound of the breaking glass.

"Care what set the beggar-wife!" she exclaimed. "Gang frae the window, ye randy."

Mistress Croale took no heed. She stood

now staring from the window still as a statue except for the panting motion of her sides. At the other window stood Janet, gazing also, with blessed face. For there, like a triton on a sea-horse, came Gibbie through the water on Snowball, swimming wearily.

He caught sight of Janet at the window, and straightway his countenance was radiant with smiles. Mistress Croale gave a shuddering sigh, drew back from her window, and betook herself again to her dark corner. Jean went to Janet's window, and there beheld the triumphal approach of her brownie, saving from the waters the lost and lamented Snowball. She shouted to her brother,

“John! John! here's yer Snawba'; here's yer Snawba'.”

John ran to her call, and, beside himself with joy when he saw his favourite come swimming along, threw the window wide, and began to bawl the most unnecessary directions and encouragements, as if the exploit had been brought thus far towards a happy issue solely through him, while from all the windows Gibbie was

welcomed with shouts and cheers and congratulations.

“Lord preserve ’s!” cried Mr. Duff, recognizing the rider at last, “it’s Rob Grant’s innocent! Wha wad hae thought it?”

“The Lord’s babes an’ sucklin’s are gey caw-pable whiles,” remarked Janet to herself.—She believed Gibbie had more faculty than any of her own, Donal included, nor did she share the prevalent prejudice of the city that heart and brains are mutually antagonistic; for in her own case she had found that her brains were never worth much to her until her heart took up the education of them. But the intellect is, so much oftener than by love, seen and felt to be sharpened by necessity and greed, that it is not surprising such a prejudice should exist.

“Tak ’im roon’ to the door.”—“Whaur got ye ’im?”—“Ye wad best get ’im in at the window upo’ the stair.”—“He’ll be maist hungert.”—“Ye’ll be some weet, I’m thinkin’!”—“Come awa’ up the stair, an’ tell’s a’ aboot it.”—A score of such conflicting shouts assailed Gibbie as he approached, and he replied to them all with the light of his countenance.

When they arrived at the door, they found a difficulty waiting them: the water was now so high that Snowball's head rose above the lintel; and, though all animals can swim, they do not all know how to dive. A tumult of suggestions immediately broke out. But Donal had already thrown himself from a window with a rope, and swum to Gibbie's assistance; the two understood each other, and heeding nothing the rest were saying, held their own communications. In a minute the rope was fastened round Snowball's body, and the end of it drawn between his fore-legs and through the ring of his head-stall, when Donal swam with it to his mother who stood on the stair, with the request that, as soon as she saw Snowball's head under the water, she would pull with all her might, and draw him in at the door. Donal then swam back, and threw his arms round Snowball's neck from below, while the same moment Gibbie cast his whole weight on it from above: the horse was over head and ears in an instant, and through the door in another. With snorting nostrils and blazing eyes his head rose in the passage, and in terror he struck out for the stair.

As he scrambled heavily up from the water, his master and Robert seized him, and with much petting and patting and gentling, though there was little enough difficulty in managing him now, conducted him into the bedroom to the rest of the horses. There he was welcomed by his companions, and immediately began devouring the hay upon his master's bedstead. Gibbie came close behind him, was seized by Janet at the top of the stair, embraced like one come alive from the grave, and led, all dripping as he was, into the room where the women were. The farmer followed soon after with the whisky, the universal medicine in those parts, of which he offered a glass to Gibbie, but the innocent turned from it with a curious look of mingled disgust and gratefulness: his father's life had not been all a failure; he had done what parents so rarely effect—handed the genuine results of his experience to his son. The sight and smell of whisky were to Gibbie a loathing flavoured with horror.

The farmer looked back from the door as he was leaving the room: Gibbie was performing a wild circular dance of which Janet was the

centre, throwing his limbs about like the toy the children call a Jumping Jack, which ended suddenly in a motionless ecstasy upon one leg. Having regarded for a moment the rescuer of Snowball with astonishment, John Duff turned away with the reflection, how easy it was and natural for those who had nothing, and therefore could lose nothing, to make merry in others' adversity. It did not once occur to him that it was the joy of having saved that caused Gibbie's merriment thus to overflow.

"The cratur's a born idiot!" he said afterwards to Jean; "an' it's jist a mervel what he's cawpable o'!—But, 'deed, there's little to cheese atween Janet an' him! They're baith tarred wi' the same stick." He paused a moment, then added, "They'll dee weel eneuch i' the ither warl', I doobtna, whaur naebody has to haud aff o' themsel's."

That day, however, Gibbie had proved that a man *may* well afford both to have nothing, and to take no care of himself, seeing he had, since he rose in the morning, rescued a friend, a foe, and a beast of the earth. Verily, he might stand on one leg!

But when he told Janet that he had been home, and had found the cottage uninjured and out of danger, she grew very sober in the midst of her gladness. She could say nothing there amongst strangers, but the dread arose in her bosom that, if indeed she had not like Peter denied her Master before men, she had like Peter yielded homage to the might of the elements in his ruling presence; and she justly saw the same faithlessness in the two failures.

“Eh!” she said to herself, “gien only I had been prayin’ i’stead o’ rinnin’ awa’, I wad hae been there whan he turnt the watter aside! I wad hae seen the mirricle! O my Maister! what think ye o’ me noo?”

For all the excitement Mistress Croale had shown at first view of Gibbie, she sat still in her dusky corner, made no movement towards him, nor did anything to attract his attention, only kept her eyes fixed upon him; and Janet in her mingled joy and pain forgot her altogether. When at length it recurred to her that she was in the room, she cast a somewhat anxious glance towards the place she had occupied all day. It was empty; and Janet was perplexed to think

how she had gone unseen. She had crept out after Mr. Duff, and probably Janet saw her, but as one of those who seeing see not, and immediately forget.

Just as the farmer left the room, a great noise arose among the cattle in that adjoining; he set down the bottle on a chair that happened to be in the passage, and ran to protect the partitions. Exultation would be a poor word wherewith to represent the madness of the delight that shot its fires into Mistress Croale's eyes when she saw the bottle actually abandoned within her reach. It was to her as the very key of the universe. She darted upon it, put it to her lips, and *drank*. Yet she took heed, thought while she drank, and did not go beyond what she could carry. Little time such an appropriation required. Noiselessly she set the bottle down, darted into a closet containing a solitary calf, and there stood looking from the open window in right innocent fashion, curiously contemplating the raft attached to it, upon which she had seen the highland woman arrive with her children.

At supper-time she was missing altogether.

Nobody could with certainty say when he had last seen her. The house was searched from top to bottom, and the conclusion arrived at was, that she must have fallen from some window and been drowned—only, surely she would at least have uttered one cry! Examining certain of the windows to know whether she might not have left some sign of such an exit, the farmer discovered that the brander was gone.

“Losh!” cried the orra man, with a face bewildered to shapelessness, like that of an old moon rising in a fog, “yon’ll be her I saw an hoor ago, hyne doon the water!”

“Ye muckle gowk!” said his master, “hoo cud she win sae far ohn gane to the boddom?”

“Upo’ the bran’er, sir,” answered the orra man. “I tuik her for a muckle dog upon a door. The wife maun be a witch!”

John Duff stared at the man with his mouth open, and for half a minute all were dumb. The thing was incredible, yet hardly to be controverted. The woman was gone, the raft was gone, and something strange that might be the two together had been observed about the time,

as near as they could judge, when she ceased to be observed in the house. Had the farmer noted the change in the level of the whisky in his bottle, he might have been surer of it—except indeed the doubt had then arisen whether they might not rather find her at the foot of the stair when the water subsided.

Mr. Duff said the luck changed with the return of Snowball; his sister said, with the departure of the beggar-wife. Before dark the rain had ceased, and it became evident that the water had not risen for the last half-hour. In two hours more it had sunk a quarter of an inch.

Gibbie threw himself on the floor beside his mother's chair, she covered him with her grey cloak, and he fell fast asleep. At dawn, he woke with a start. He had dreamed that Ginevra was in trouble. He made Janet understand that he would return to guide them home as soon as the way was practicable, and set out at once.

The water fell rapidly. Almost as soon as it was morning, the people at the Mains could begin doing a little towards restoration. But

from that day forth, for about a year, instead of the waters of the Daur and the Lorrie, the house was filled with the gradually subsiding flood of Jean's lamentations over her house-gear—one thing after another, and twenty things together. There was scarcely an article she did not, over and over, proclaim utterly ruined, in a tone apparently indicating ground of serious complaint against some one who did not appear, though most of the things, to other eyes than hers, remained seemingly about as useful as before. In vain her brother sought to comfort her with the assurance that there were worse losses at Culloden; she answered, that if he had not himself been specially favoured in the recovery of Snowball, he would have made a much worse complaint about him alone than she did about all her losses; whereupon, being an honest man, and not certain that she spoke other than the truth, he held his peace. But he never made the smallest acknowledgment to Gibbie for the saving of the said Snowball: what could an idiot understand about gratitude? and what use was money to a boy who did not set his life at a pin's fee? But he al-

ways spoke kindly to him thereafter, which was more to Gibbie than anything he could have given him; and when a man is content, his friends may hold their peace.

The next day Jean had her dinner strangely provided. As her brother wrote to a friend in Glasgow, she "found at the back of the house, and all lying in a heap, a handsome dish of trout, a pike, a hare, a partridge, and a turkey, with a dish of potatoes, and a dish of turnips, all brought down by the burn, and deposited there for the good of the house, except the turkey, which, alas! was one of her own favourite flock." *

In the afternoon, Gibbie re-appeared at the Mains, and Robert and Janet set out at once to go home with him. It was a long journey for

* See Sir Thomas Dick Lauder's account of the Morayshire Floods in 1829 (1st Ed., p. 181.)—an enchanting book, especially to one whose earliest memories are interwoven with water-floods. For details in such kind here given, I am much indebted to it. Again and again, as I have been writing, has it rendered me miserable—my tale showing so flat and poor beside Sir Thomas's narrative. Known to me from childhood, it wakes in me far more wonder and pleasure now, than it did even in the days when the marvel of things came more to the surface.

them—he had to take them so many rounds. They rested at several houses, and saw much misery on their way. It was night before they arrived at the cottage. They found it warm and clean and tidy: Ginevra had, like a true lady, swept the house that gave her shelter: that ladies often do; and perhaps it is yet more their work in the world than they fully understand. For Ginevra, it was heavenly bliss to her to hear their approaching footsteps; and before she left them she had thoroughly learned that the poorest place where the atmosphere is love, is more homely, and by consequence more heavenly, than the most beautiful even, where law and order are the elements supreme.

“Eh, gien I had only had faith an’ bidden!” said Janet to herself as she entered; and to the day of her death she never ceased to bemoan her too hasty desertion of “the wee hoosie upo’ the muckle rock.”

As to the strange woman’s evident knowledge concerning Gibbie, she could do nothing but wait—fearing rather than hoping; but she had got so far above time and chance, that nothing really troubled her, and she could wait

quietly. At the same time it did not seem likely they would hear anything more of the woman herself: no one believed she could have gone very far without being whelmed, or *whumled* as they said, in the fierce waters.

CHAPTER XV.

MR. SCLATER.

IT may be remembered that, upon Gibbie's disappearance from the city, great interest was felt in his fate, and such questions started about the boy himself as moved the Rev. Clement Sclater to gather all the information at which he could arrive concerning his family and history. That done, he proceeded to attempt interesting in his unknown fortunes those relatives of his mother whose existence and residences he had discovered. In this, however, he had met with no success. At the house where she was born, there was now no one but a second cousin, to whom her brother, dying unmarried, had left the small estate of the Withrops, along with the family contempt for her husband, and for her because of him, inasmuch as, by marry-

ing him, she had brought disgrace upon herself, and upon all her people. So said the cousin to Mr. Sclater, but seemed himself nowise humbled by the disgrace he recognized, indeed almost claimed. As to the orphan, he said, to speak honestly, (as he did at least that once), the more entirely he disappeared, the better he would consider it—not that personally he was the least concerned in the matter; only if, according to the scripture, there were two more generations yet upon which had to be visited the sins of Sir George and Lady Galbraith, the greater the obscurity in which they remained, the less would be the scandal. The brother who had taken to business, was the senior partner in a large ship-building firm at Greenock. This man, William Fuller Withrop by name—Wilful Withrop the neighbours had nicknamed him—was a bachelor, and reputed rich. Mr. Sclater did not hear of him what roused very brilliant hopes. He was one who would demand more reason than reasonable for the most reasonable of actions that involved parting with money; yet he had been known to do a liberal thing for a public object. Waste

was so wicked that any other moral risk was preferable. Of the three, he would waste mind and body rather than estate. Man was made neither to rejoice nor to mourn, but to possess. To leave no stone unturned, however, Mr. Solater wrote to Mr. Withrop. The answer he received was, that, as the sister, concerning whose child he had applied to him, had never been anything but a trouble to the family; as he had no associations with her memory save those of misery and disgrace; as, before he left home, her name had long ceased to be mentioned among them; and as her own father had deliberately and absolutely disowned her because of her obstinate disobedience and wilfulness, it could hardly be expected of him, and indeed would ill become him, to show any lively interest in her offspring. Still, although he could not honestly pretend to the smallest concern about him, he had, from pure curiosity, made inquiry of correspondents with regard to the boy; from which the resulting knowledge was, that he was little better than an idiot, whose character, education, and manners, had been picked up in the streets. Nothing, he

was satisfied, could be done for such a child, which would not make him more miserable, as well as more wicked, than he was already. Therefore, &c., &c., &c.

Thus failing, Mr. Sclater said to himself he had done all that could be required of him—and he had indeed taken trouble. Nor could anything be asserted, he said further to himself, as his duty in respect of this child, that was not equally his duty in respect of every little wanderer in the streets of his parish. That a child's ancestors had been favoured above others, and had so misused their advantages that their last representative was left in abject poverty, could hardly be a reason why that child, born, in more than probability, with the same evil propensities which had ruined them, should be made an elect object of favour. Who was he, Clement Sclater, to intrude upon the divine prerogative, and presume to act on the doctrine of election! Was a child with a *Sir* to his name, anything more in the eyes of God than a child without a name at all? Would any title—even that of Earl or Duke, be recognized in the kingdom of heaven? His relatives ought

to do something : they failing, of whom could further requisition be made ? There were vessels to honour and vessels to dishonour : to which class this one belonged, let God in his time reveal. A duty could not be passed on. It could not become the duty of the minister of a parish, just because those who ought and could, would not, to spend time and money, to the neglect of his calling, in hunting up a boy whom he would not know what to do with if he had him, a boy whose home had been with the dregs of society.

In justice to Mr. Sclater, it must be mentioned that he did not know Gibbie, even by sight. There remains room, however, for the question, whether, if Mr. Sclater had not been the man to change his course as he did afterwards, he would not have acted differently from the first.

One morning, as he sat at breakfast with his wife, late Mrs. Bonniman, and cast, as is, I fear, the rude habit of not a few husbands, not a few stolen glances, as he ate, over the morning paper, his eye fell upon a paragraph announcing the sudden death of the well-known William Fuller Withrop, of the eminent ship-build-

ing firm of Withrop and Playtell, of Greenock. Until he came to the end of the paragraph, his cup of coffee hung suspended in mid air. Then down it went untasted, he jumped from his seat, and hurried from the room. For the said paragraph ended with the remark, that the not unfrequent incapacity of the ablest of business men for looking the inevitable in the face with coolness sufficient to the making of a will, was not only a curious fact, but in the individual case a pity, where two hundred thousand pounds was concerned. Had the writer been a little more philosophical still, he might have seen that the faculty for making money by no means involves judgment in the destination of it, and that the money may do its part for good and evil without, just as well as with a will at the back of it.

But though this was the occasion, it remains to ask what was the cause of the minister's precipitancy. Why should Clement Sclater thereupon spring from his chair in such a state of excitement that he set his cup of coffee down upon its side instead of its bottom, to the detriment of the tablecloth, and of something be-

sides, more unquestionably the personal property of his wife? Why was it that, heedless of her questions, backed although they were both by just anger and lawful curiosity, he ran straight from the room and the house, nor stayed until, at one and the same moment, his foot was on the top step of his lawyer's door, and his hand upon its bell? No doubt it was somebody's business, and perhaps it might be Mr. Sclater's, to find the heirs of men who died intestate; but what made it so indubitably, so emphatically, so individually, so pressingly Mr. Sclater's, that he forgot breakfast, tablecloth, wife, and sermon, all together, that he might see to this boy's rights? Surely if they were rights, they could be in no such imminent danger as this haste seemed to signify. Was it only that he might be the first in the race to right him?—and if so, then again, why? Was it a certainty indisputable, that any boy, whether such an idle tramp as the minister supposed this one to be or not, would be redeemed by the heirship to the hugest of fortunes? Had it, some time before this, become at length easier for a rich boy to enter into the kingdom

of heaven? Or was it that, with all his honesty, all his religion, all his churchism, all his protestantism, and his habitual appeal to the word of God, the minister was yet a most reverential worshipper of Mammon—not the old god mentioned in the New Testament, of course, but a thoroughly respectable modern Mammon, decently dressed, perusing a subscription list? No doubt justice ought to be done, and the young man over at Roughrigs was sure to be putting in a false claim, but where were the lawyers, whose business it was? There was no need of a clergyman to remind them of their duty where the picking of such a carcass was concerned. Had Mr. Sclater ever conceived the smallest admiration or love for the boy, I would not have made these reflections; but, in his ignorance of him and indifference concerning him, he believed there would at least be trouble in proving him of approximately sound mind and decent intellect. What then, I repeat and leave it, did all this excitement on the part of one of the iron pillars of the church indicate?

From his lawyer he would have gone at once

to Mistress Croale—indeed I think he would have gone to her first, to warn her against imparting what information concerning Gibbie she might possess to any other than himself, but he had not an idea where she might even be heard of. He had cleansed his own parish, as he thought, by pulling up the tare, contrary to commandment, and throwing it into his neighbour's, where it had taken root, and grown a worse tare than before ; until at length, she who had been so careful over the manners and morals of her drunkards, was a drunkard herself and a wanderer, with the reputation of being a far worse woman than she really was. For some years now she had made her living, one poor enough, by hawking small household necessities ; and not unfrequently where she appeared, the housewives bought of her because her eyes, and her nose, and an undefined sense of evil in her presence, made them shrink from the danger of offending her. But the real cause of the bad impression she made was, that she was sorely troubled with what is, by huge discourtesy, called a bad conscience—being in reality a conscience doing its duty so well

that it makes the whole house uncomfortable.

On her next return to the Daurfoot, as the part of the city was called where now she was most at home, she heard the astounding and welcome news that Gibbie had fallen heir to a large property, and that the reward of one hundred pounds—a modest sum indeed, but where was the good of wasting money, thought Mr. Sclater—had been proclaimed by tuck of drum, to any one giving such information as should lead to the discovery of Sir Gilbert Galbraith, commonly known as *wee Sir Gibbie*. A description of him was added, and the stray was so *kenspeckle*, that Mistress Croale saw the necessity of haste to any hope of advantage. She had nothing to guide her beyond the fact of Sir George's habit, in his cups, of referring to the property on Daurside, and the assurance that with the said habit Gibbie must have been as familiar as herself. With this initiative, as she must begin somewhere, and could prosecute her business anywhere, she filled her basket and set out at once for Daurside. There, after a good deal of wandering hither and thither, and a search whose fruitlessness she probably owed

to too great caution, she made the desired discovery unexpectedly and marvellously, and left behind her in the valley the reputation of having been on more familiar terms with the flood and the causes of it, than was possible to any but one who kept company worse than human.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MUCKLE HOOSE.

THE next morning, Janet felt herself in duty bound to make inquiry concerning those interested in Miss Galbraith. She made, therefore, the best of her way with Gibbie to the *Muckle Hoose*, but, as the latter expected, found it a ruin in a wilderness. Acres of trees and shrubbery had disappeared, and a hollow waste of sand and gravel was in their place. What was left of the house stood on the edge of a red gravelly precipice of fifty feet in height, at whose foot lay the stones of the kitchen-wing, in which had been the room whence Gibbie carried Ginevra. The newer part of the house was gone from its very roots; the ancient portion, all innovation wiped from it, stood grim, desolated, marred, and defiant as of old. Not a sign of

life was about the place; the very birds had fled. Angus had been there that same morning, and had locked or nailed up every possible entrance: the place looked like a ruin of centuries. With difficulty they got down into the gulf, with more difficulty crossed the burn, clambered up the rocky bank on the opposite side, and knocked at the door of the gamekeeper's cottage. But they saw only a little girl, who told them her father had gone to find the laird, that her mother was ill in bed, and Mistress Mac Farlane on her way to her own people.

It came out afterwards that when Angus and the housekeeper heard Gibbie's taps at the window, and, looking out, saw nobody there, but the burn within a few yards of the house, they took the warning for a supernatural interference to the preservation of their lives, and fled at once. Passing the foot of the stair, Mistress Mac Farlane shrieked to Ginevra to come, but ran on without waiting a reply. They told afterwards that she left the house with them, and that, suddenly missing her, they went back to look for her, but could find her

nowhere, and were just able to make their second escape with their lives, hearing the house fall into the burn behind them. Mistress Mac Farlane had been severe as the law itself against lying among the maids, but now, when it came to her own defence where she knew herself wrong, she lied just like one of the wicked.

“My dear missie,” said Janet, when they got home, “ye maun write to yer father, or he’ll be oot o’ ’s wuts about ye.”

Ginevra wrote therefore to the duke’s, and to the laird’s usual address in London as well; but he was on his way from the one place to the other when Angus overtook him, and received neither letter.

Now came to the girl a few such days of delight, of freedom, of life, as she had never even dreamed of. She roamed Glashgar with Gibbie, the gentlest, kindest, most interesting of companions. Wherever his sheep went, she went too, and to many places besides—some of them such strange, wild, terrible places, as would have terrified her without him. How he startled her once by darting off a rock like a

seagull, straight, head-foremost, into the Death-pot! She screamed with horror, but he had done it only to amuse her; for, after what seemed to her a fearful time, he came smiling up out of the terrible darkness. What a brave, beautiful boy he was! He never hurt anything, and nothing ever seemed to hurt him. And what a number of things he knew! He showed her things on the mountain, things in the sky, things in the pools and streams wherever they went. He did better than tell her about them; he made her see them, and then the things themselves told her. She was not always certain she saw just what he wanted her to see, but she always saw something that made her glad with knowledge. He had a New Testament Janet had given him, which he carried in his pocket, and when she joined him, for he was always out with his sheep hours before she was up, she would generally find him seated on a stone, or lying in the heather, with the little book in his hand, looking solemn and sweet. But the moment he saw her, he would spring merrily up to welcome her. It were indeed an argument against religion as strong as sad, if one

of the children the kingdom specially claims, could not be possessed by the life of the Son of God without losing his simplicity and joyousness. Those of my readers will be the least inclined to doubt the boy, who, by obedience, have come to know its reward. For obedience alone holds wide the door for the entrance of the spirit of wisdom. There was as little to wonder at in Gibbie as there was much to love and admire, for from the moment when, yet a mere child, he heard there was such a one claiming his obedience, he began to turn to him the hearing ear, the willing heart, the ready hand. The main thing which rendered this devotion more easy and natural to him than to others was, that, more than in most, the love of man had in him prepared the way of the Lord. He who so loved the sons of men was ready to love the Son of Man the moment he heard of him; love makes obedience a joy; and of him who obeys all heaven is the patrimony—he is fellow-heir with Christ.

On the fourth day, the rain, which had been coming and going, finally cleared off, the sun was again glorious, and the farmers began to

hope a little for the drying and ripening of some portion of their crops. Then first Ginevra asked Gibbie to take her down to Glashruach; she wanted to see the ruin they had described to her. When she came near, and notions changed into visible facts, she neither wept nor wailed. She felt very miserable, it is true, but it was at finding that the evident impossibility of returning thither for a long time, woke in her pleasure and not pain. So utterly altered was the look of everything, that had she come upon it unexpectedly, she would not have recognized either place or house. They went up to a door. She seemed never to have seen it; but when they entered, she knew it as one from the hall into a passage, which, with what it led to, being gone, the inner had become an outer door. A quantity of sand was heaped up in the hall, and the wainscot was wet and swelled and bulging. They went into the dining-room. It was a miserable sight—the very picture of the soul of a drunkard. The thick carpet was sodden—spongy like a bed of moss after heavy rains; the leather chairs looked diseased; the colour was all gone from the table; the paper

hung loose from the walls ; and everything lay where the water, after floating it about, had let it drop as it ebbed.

She ascended the old stone stair which led to her father's rooms above, went into his study, in which not a chair was out of its place, and walked towards the window to look across to where once had been her own chamber. But as she approached it, there, behind the curtain, she saw her father, motionless, looking out. She turned pale, and stood. Even at such a time, had she known he was in the house, she would not have dared set her foot in that room. Gibbie, who had followed and entered behind her, perceived her hesitation, saw and recognized the back of the laird, knew that she was afraid of her father, and stood also, waiting he knew not what.

“Eh!” he said to himself, “hers is no like mine! Nae mony has had fathers sae guid’s mine.”

Becoming aware of a presence, the laird half turned, and seeing Gibbie, imagined he had entered in a prowling way, supposing the place deserted. With stately offence he asked him

what he wanted there, and waved his dismissal. Then first he saw another, standing white-faced, with eyes fixed upon him. He turned pale also, and stood staring at her. The memory of that moment ever after disgraced him in his own eyes: for one instant of unreasoning weakness, he imagined he saw a ghost—believed what he said he knew to be impossible. It was but one moment, but it might have been more, had not Ginevra walked slowly up to him, saying in a trembling voice, as if she expected the blame of all that had happened, “I couldn’t help it, papa.” He took her in his arms, and, for the first time since the discovery of her atrocious familiarity with Donal, kissed her. She clung to him, trembling now with pleasure as well as apprehension. But, alas! there was no impiety in the faithlessness that pronounced such a joy too good to endure, and the end came yet sooner than she feared. For, when the father rose erect from her embrace, and was again the laird, there, to his amazement, still stood the odd-looking, outlandish intruder, smiling with the most impertinent interest! Gibbie had forgotten himself altogether, beholding

what he took for a thorough reconciliation.

"Go away, boy. You have nothing to do here," said the laird, anger almost overwhelming his precious dignity.

"Oh papa!" cried Ginevra, clasping her hands, "that's Gibbie! He saved my life. I should have been drowned but for him."

The laird was both proud and stupid, therefore more than ordinarily slow to understand what he was unprepared to hear.

"I am much obliged to him," he said haughtily; "but there is no occasion for him to wait."

At this point his sluggish mind began to recall something:—why, this was the very boy he saw in the meadow with her that morning!—He turned fiercely upon him where he lingered, either hoping for a word of adieu from Ginevra, or unwilling to go while she was uncomfortable.

"Leave the house instantly," he said, "or I will knock you down."

"O papa!" moaned Ginevra wildly—it was the braver of her that she was trembling from head to foot, "don't speak so to Gibbie. He is a good boy. It was he that Angus whipped so

cruelly—long ago: I have never been able to forget it.”

Her father was confounded at her presumption: how dared she expostulate with him! She had grown a bold, bad girl! Good heavens! Evil communications!

“If he does not get out of this directly,” he cried, “I will have him whipped again.—Angus.”

He shouted the name, and its echo came back in a wild tone, altogether strange to Ginevra. She seemed struggling in the meshes of an evil dream. Involuntarily she uttered a cry of terror and distress. Gibbie was at her side instantly, putting out his hand to comfort her. She was just laying hers on his arm, scarcely knowing what she did, when her father seized him, and dashed him to the other side of the room. He went staggering backwards, vainly trying to recover himself, and fell, his head striking against the wall. The same instant Angus entered, saw nothing of Gibbie where he lay, and approached his master. But when he caught sight of Ginevra, he gave a gasp of

terror that ended in a broken yell, and stared as if he had come suddenly on the verge of the bottomless pit, while all round his head his hair stood out as if he had been electrified. Before he came to himself, Gibbie had recovered and risen. He saw now that he could be of no service to Ginevra, and that his presence only made things worse for her. But he saw also that she was unhappy about him, and that must not be. He broke into such a merry laugh—and it had need to be merry, for it had to do the work of many words of reassurance—that she could scarcely refrain from a half hysterical response as he walked from the room. The moment he was out of the house, he began to sing; and for many minutes, as he walked up the gulf hollowed by the Glashburn, Ginevra could hear the strange, other-world voice, and knew it was meant to hold communion with her and comfort her.

“What do you know of that fellow, Angus?” asked his master.

“He’s the verra deevil himsel’, sir,” muttered Angus, whom Gibbie’s laughter had in a measure brought to his senses.

"You will see that he is sent off the property at once—and for good, Angus," said the laird. "His insolence is insufferable. The scoundrel!"

On the pretext of following Gibbie, Angus was only too glad to leave the room. Then Mr. Galbraith turned upon his daughter.

"So, Jenny!" he said, with his loose lips pulled out straight, "that is the sort of companion you choose when left to yourself!—a low, beggarly, insolent scamp!—scarcely the equal of the brutes he has the charge of!"

"They're sheep, papa!" pleaded Ginevra, in a wail that rose almost to a scream.

"I do believe the girl is an idiot!" said her father, and turned from her contemptuously.

"I think I am, papa," she sobbed. "Don't mind me. Let me go away, and I will never trouble you any more."—She would go to the mountain, she thought, and be a shepherdess with Gibbie.

Her father took her roughly by the arm, pushed her into a closet, locked the door, went and had his luncheon, and in the afternoon, having borrowed Snowball, took her just as she was, drove to meet the mail coach, and in the

middle of the night was set down with her at the principal hotel in the city, whence the next morning, he set out early to find a school where he might leave her and his responsibility with her.

When Gibbie knew himself beyond the hearing of Ginevra, his song died away, and he went home sad. The gentle girl had stepped at once from the day into the dark, and he was troubled for her. But he remembered that she had another father besides the laird, and comforted himself.

When he reached home, he found his mother in serious talk with a stranger. The tears were in her eyes, and had been running down her cheeks, but she was calm and dignified as usual.

"Here he comes!" she said as he entered. "The will o' the Lord be dene—noo an' for ever-mair! I'm at his biddin'.—An' sae's Gibbie."

It was Mr. Sclater. The witch had sailed her brander well.

CHAPTER XVII.

DAUR STREET.

ONE bright afternoon, towards the close of the autumn, the sun shining straight down one of the wide clean stony streets of the city, with a warmth which he had not been able to impart to the air, a company of school-girls, two and two in long file, mostly with innocent, and, for human beings, rather uninteresting faces, was walking in orderly manner, a female grenadier at its head, along the pavement, more than usually composed, from having the sun in their eyes. Amongst the faces was one very different from the rest, a countenance almost solemn and a little sad, of still, regular features, in the eyes of which by loving eyes might have been read uneasy thought patiently carried, and the lack of some essential to conscious well-

being. The other girls were looking on this side and that, eager to catch sight of anything to trouble the monotony of the daily walk ; but the eyes of this one were cast down, except when occasionally lifted in answer to words of the schoolmistress, the grenadier, by whose side she was walking. They were lovely brown eyes, trustful and sweet, and although, as I have said, a little sad, they never rose, even in reply to the commonest remark, without shining a little. Though younger than not a few of them, and very plainly dressed, like all the others—I have a suspicion that Scotch mothers dress their girls rather too plainly, which tends to the growth of an undue and degrading *love* of dress—she was not so girlish, was indeed, in some respects, more of a young woman than even the governess who walked by the side of them.

Suddenly came a rush, a confusion, a fluttering of the doves, whence or how none seemed to know, a gentle shriek from several of the girls, a general sense of question and no answer ; but, as their ruffled nerves composed themselves a little, there was the vision of the

schoolmistress poking the point of her parasol at a heedless face, radiant with smiles, that of an odd-looking lad, as they thought, who had got hold of one of the daintily gloved hands of her companion, laid a hand which, considered conventionally, was not that of a gentleman, upon her shoulder, and stood, without a word, gazing in rapturous delight.

“Go away, boy! What do you mean by such impertinence?” cried the outraged Miss Kimble, changing her thrust, and poking in his chest the parasol with which she had found it impossible actually to assail his smiling countenance.—Such a strange looking creature! He could not be in his sound senses, she thought. In the momentary meantime, however, she had failed to observe that, after the first start and following tremor, her companion stood quite still, and was now looking in the lad’s face with roseate cheeks and tear-filled eyes, apparently forgetting to draw her hand from his, or to move her shoulder from under his caress. The next moment, up, with hasty yet dignified step, came the familiar form of their own minister, the Rev. Clement Sclater, who with

reproof in his countenance, which was red with annoyance and haste, laid his hands on the lad's shoulders to draw him from the prey on which he had pounced.

"Remember, you are not on a hill-side, but in a respectable street," said the reverend gentleman, a little foolishly.

The youth turned his head over his shoulder, not otherwise changing his attitude, and looked at him with some bewilderment. Then, not he, but the young lady spoke.

"Gibbie and I are old friends," she said, and reaching up laid her free hand in turn on his shoulder, as if to protect him—for, needlessly with such grace and strength before her, the vision of an old horror came rushing back on the mind of Ginevra.

Gibbie had darted from his companion's side some hundred yards off. The cap which Mr. Sclater had insisted on his wearing, had fallen as he ran, and he had never missed it; his hair stood out on all sides of his head, and the sun behind him shone in it like a glory, just as when first he appeared to Ginevra in the peat-moss, like an angel standing over her. Indeed,

while to Miss Kimble and the girls he was "*a mad-like object*" in his awkward ill-fitting clothes, made by a village tailor in the height of the village fashion, to Ginevra he looked hardly less angelic now than he did then. His appearance, judged without prejudice, was rather that of a sailor boy on shore than a shepherd boy from the hills.

"Miss Galbraith!" said Miss Kimble, in the tone that indicates nostrils distended, "I am astonished at you! What an example to the school! I never knew you misbehave yourself before! Take your hand from this—this—very strange looking person's shoulder directly."

Ginevra obeyed, but Gibbie stood as before.

"Remove your hand, boy, instantly," cried Miss Kimble, growing more and more angry, and began knocking the hand on the girl's shoulder with her parasol, which apparently Gibbie took for a joke, for he laughed aloud.

"Pray do not alarm yourself, ma'am," said Mr. Sclater, slowly recovering his breath: he was not yet quite sure of Gibbie, or confident how best he was to be managed; "this young—gentleman is Sir Gilbert Galbraith, my ward.—"

Sir Gilbert, this lady is Miss Kimble. You must have known her father well—the Rev. Matthew Kimble of the next parish to your own?”

Gibbie smiled. He did not nod, for that would have meant that he did know him, and he did not remember having ever even heard the name of the Rev. Matthew Kimble.

“Oh!” said the lady, who had ceased her battery, and stood bewildered and embarrassed—the more that by this time the girls had all gathered round, staring and wondering.

Ginevra’s eyes too had filled with wonder; she cast them down, and a strange smile began to play about her sweet strong mouth. All at once she was in the middle of a fairy tale, and had not a notion what was coming next. Her dumb shepherd boy a baronet!—and, more wonderful still, a Galbraith! She must be dreaming in the wide street! The last she had seen of him was as he was driven from the house by her father, when he had just saved her life. That was but a few weeks ago, and here he was, called Sir Gilbert Galbraith! It was a delicious bit of wonderment.

"Oh!" said Miss Kimble a second time, recovering herself a little, "I see! A relative, Miss Galbraith! I did not understand. That of course sets everything right—at least—even then—the open street, you know!—*You* will understand, Mr. Sclater.—I beg your pardon, Sir Gilbert. I hope I did not hurt you with my parasol!"

Gibbie again laughed aloud.

"Thank you," said Miss Kimble confused, and annoyed with herself for being so, especially before her girls. "I should be sorry to have hurt you.—Going to college, I presume, Sir Gilbert?"

Gibbie looked at Mr. Sclater.

"He is going to study with me for a while first," answered the minister.

"I am glad to hear it. He could not do better," said Miss Kimble. "Come, girls."

And with friendly farewells, she moved on, her train after her, thinking with herself what a boor the young fellow was—the young—baronet?—Yes, he must be a baronet; he was too young to have been knighted already. But where ever could he have been brought up?

Mr. Sclater had behaved judiciously, and taken gentle pains to satisfy the old couple that they must part with Gibbie. One of the neighbouring clergy knew Mr. Sclater well, and with him paid the old people a visit, to help them to dismiss any lingering doubt that he was the boy's guardian legally appointed. To their own common sense indeed it became plain that, except some such story was true, there could be nothing to induce him to come after Gibbie, or desire to take charge of the outcast; but they did not feel thoroughly satisfied until Mr. Sclater brought Fergus Duff to the cottage, to testify to him as being what he pretended. It was a sore trial, but amongst the griefs of losing him, no fear of his forgetting them was included. Mr. Sclater's main difficulty was with Gibbie himself. At first he laughed at the absurdity of his going away from his father and mother and the sheep. They told him he was Sir Gilbert Galbraith. He answered on his slate, as well as by signs which Janet at least understood perfectly, that he had told them so, and had been so all the time, "and what differ dos that mak?" he added. Mr. Sclater told

him he was—or would be, at least, he took care to add, when he came of age—a rich man as well as a baronet.

“Writch men,” wrote Gibbie, “dee as they like, and Ise bide.”

Mr. Sclater told him it was only poor boys who could do as they pleased, for the law looked after boys like him, so that, when it came into their hands, they might be capable of using their money properly. Almost persuaded at length that he had no choice, that he could no longer be his own master, until he was one and twenty, he turned and looked at Janet, his eyes brimful of tears. She gave him a little nod. He rose and went out, climbed the crest of Glashgar, and did not return to the cottage till midnight.

In the morning appeared on his countenance signs of unusual resolve. Amid the many thoughts he had had the night before, had come the question—what he would do with the money when he had it—first of all what he *could* do for Janet and Robert and every one of their family; and naturally enough to a Scotch boy, the first thing that occurred to him was, to give

Donal money to go to college like Fergus Duff. In that he knew he made no mistake. It was not so easy to think of things for the rest, but that was safe. Had not Donal said twenty times he would not mind being a herd all his life, if only he could go to college first? But then he began to think what a long time it was before he would be one and twenty, and what a number of things might come and go before then: Donal might by that time have a wife and children, and he could not leave them to go to college! Why should not Mr. Sclater manage somehow that Donal should go at once? It was now the end almost of October, and the college opened in November. Some other rich person would lend them the money, and he would pay it, with compound interest, when he got his. Before he went to bed, he got his slate, and wrote as follows:

“my dear minister, If you will teak Donal too, and lett him go to the kolledg, I will go with you as seems ye like; butt if ye will not, I will runn away.”

When Mr. Sclater, who had a bed at the gamekeeper's, appeared the next morning, anx-

ious to conclude the business, and get things in motion for their departure, Gibbie handed him the slate the moment he entered the cottage, and while he read, stood watching him.

Now Mr. Sclater was a prudent man, and always looked ahead, therefore apparently took a long time to read Gibbie's very clear, although unscholarly communication; before answering it, he must settle the probability of what Mrs. Sclater would think of the proposal to take *two* savages into her house together, where also doubtless the presence of this Donal would greatly interfere with the process of making a gentleman of Gibbie. Unable to satisfy himself, he raised his head at length, unconsciously shaking it as he did so. That instant Gibbie was out of the house. Mr. Sclater, perceiving the blunder he had made, hurried after him, but he was already out of sight. Returning in some dismay, he handed the slate to Janet, who, with sad, resigned countenance, was *baking*. She rubbed the oatmeal dough from her hands, took the slate, and read with a smile.

"Ye maunna tak Gibbie for a young cowl, Maister Sclater, an' think to brak him in," she

said, after a thoughtful pause, "or ye'll hae to learn yer mistak. There's no eneuch o' himsel' in him for ye to get a grip o' 'm by that han'le. He aye kens what he wad hae, an' he'll aye get it, as sure's it'll aye be richt. As anent Donal, Donal's my ain, an' I s' say naething. Sit ye doon, sir; ye'll no see Gibbie the day again."

"Is there no means of getting at him, my good woman?" said Mr. Sclater, miserable at the prospect of a day utterly wasted.

"I cud gie ye sicht o' 'im, I daursay, but what better wad ye be for that? Gien ye hed a' the lawyers o' Embrough at yer back, ye wadna touch Gibbie upo' Glashgar."

"But you could persuade him, I am sure, Mistress Grant. You have only to call him in your own way, and he will come at once."

"What wad ye hae me perswaud him till, sir? To onything 'at's richt, Gibbie wants nae perswaudin'; an' for this 'at's 'atween ye, the laddies are jist verra brithers, an' I hae no richt to interfere wi' what the tane wad for the tither, the thing seemin' to me rizon eneuch."

"What sort of lad is this son of yours? The boy seems much attached to him!"

"He's a laddie 'at's been gien ower till's buik sin' ever I learnt him to read mysel'," Janet answered. "But he'll be here the nicht, I'm thinkin', to see the last o' puir Gibbie, an' ye can jeedge for yersel'."

It required but a brief examination of Donal to satisfy Mr. Sclater that he was more than prepared for the university. But I fear me greatly the time is at hand when such as Donal will no more be able to enter her courts. Unwise and unpatriotic are any who would rather have a few prime scholars sitting about the wells of learning, than see those fountains flow freely for the poor, who are yet the strength of a country. It is better to have many upon the high road of learning, than a few even at its goal, if that were possible.

As to Donal's going to Mr. Sclater's house, Janet soon relieved him.

"Na, na, sir," she said; "it wad be to learn w'ys 'at wadna be fittin' a puir lad like him."

"It would be much safer for him," said Mr. Sclater, but incidentally.

"Gien I cudna lippen my Donal till's ain company an' the hunger for better, I wad begin

to doobt wha made the warl'," said his mother ; and Donal's face flushed with pleasure at her confidence. "Na, he maun get a garret roomie some gait i' the toon, an' there haud till's buik ; an ye'll lat Gibbie gang an' see him whiles whan he can be spared. There maun be many a dacent widow wuman 'at wad be pleased to tak him in."

Mr. Sclater seemed to himself to foresee no little trouble in his new responsibility, but consoled himself that he would have more money at his command, and in the end would sit, as it were, at the fountain-head of large wealth. Already, with his wife's property, he was a man of consideration ; but he had a great respect for money, and much overrated its value as a means of doing even what *he* called good : religious people generally do—with a most unchristian dulness. We are not told that the Master made the smallest use of money for his end. When he paid the temple-rate, he did it to avoid giving offence ; and he defended the woman who divinely wasted it. Ten times more grace and magnanimity would be needed, wisely and lovingly to avoid making a fortune,

than it takes to spend one for what are called good objects when it is made.

When they met Miss Kimble and her "young ladies," they were on their way from the coach-office to the minister's house in Daur Street. Gibbie knew every corner, and strange was the swift variety of thoughts and sensations that went fling through his mind. Up this same street he had tended the wavering steps of a well-known if not highly respected town-councillor! that was the door, where, one cold morning of winter, the cook gave him a cup of hot coffee and a roll! What happy days they were, with their hunger and adventure! There had always been food and warmth about the city, and he had come in for his share! The Master was in its streets as certainly as on the rocks of Glashgar. Not one sheep did he lose sight of, though he could not do so much for those that would not follow, and had to have the dog sent after them!

CHAPTER XVIII.

MRS. SCLATER.

GIBBIE was in a dream of mingled past and future delights, when his conductor stopped at a large and important-looking house, with a flight of granite steps up to the door. Gibbie had never been inside such a house in his life, but when they entered, he was not much impressed. He did look with a little surprise, it is true, but it was down, not up: he felt his feet walking soft, and wondered for a moment that there should be a field of grass in a house. Then he gave a glance round, thought it was a big place, and followed Mr. Sclater up the stair with the free mounting step of the Glashgar shepherd. Forgetful and unconscious, he walked into the drawing-room with his bonnet on his head. Mrs. Sclater rose when they entered,

and he approached her with a smile of welcome to the house which he carried, always full of guests, in his bosom. He never thought of looking to her to welcome him. She shook hands with him in a doubtful kind of way.

"How do you do, Sir Gilbert?" she said. "Only ladies are allowed to wear their caps in the drawing-room, you know," she added, in a tone of courteous and half rallying rebuke, speaking from a flowery height of conscious superiority.

What she meant by the drawing-room, Gibbie had not an idea. He looked at her head, and saw no cap; she had nothing upon it but a quantity of beautiful black hair; then suddenly remembered his bonnet; he knew well enough bonnets had to be taken off in house or cottage: he had never done so because he never had worn a bonnet. But it was with a smile of amusement only that he now took it off. He was so free from selfishness that he knew nothing of shame. Never a shadow of blush at his bad manners tinged his cheek. He put the cap in his pocket, and catching sight of a footstool by the corner of the chimney-piece, was

so strongly reminded of his creepie by the cottage-hearth, which, big lad as he now was, he had still haunted, that he went at once and seated himself upon it. From this coign of vantage he looked round the room with a gentle curiosity, casting a glance of pleasure every now and then at Mrs. Sclater, to whom her husband, in a manner somewhat constrained because of his presence, was recounting some of the incidents of his journey, making choice, after the manner of many, of the most commonplace and uninteresting.

Gibbie had not been educated in the relative grandeur of things of this world, and he regarded the things he now saw just as things, without the smallest notion of any power in them to confer superiority by being possessed: can a slave knight his master? The reverend but poor Mr. Sclater was not above the foolish consciousness of importance accruing from the refined adjuncts of a more needy corporeal existence; his wife would have felt out of her proper sphere had she ceased to see them around her, and would have lost some of her *aplomb*; but the divine idiot Gibbie was incapa-

ble even of the notion that they mattered a straw to the life of any man. Indeed, to compare man with man was no habit of his; hence it cannot be wonderful that stone hearth and steel grate, clay floor and Brussels carpet were much the same to him. Man was the one sacred thing. Gibbie's unconscious creed was a powerful leveller, but it was a leveller up, not down. The heart that revered the beggar could afford to be incapable of homage to position. His was not one of those contemptible natures which have no reverence because they have no aspiration, which think themselves fine because they acknowledge nothing superior to their own essential baseness. To Gibbie every man was better than himself. It was for him a sudden and strange descent—from the region of poetry and closest intercourse with the strong and gracious and vital simplicities of Nature, human and other, to the rich commonplaces, amongst them not a few fashionable vulgarities, of an ordinary well appointed house, and ordinary well appointed people; but, however bedizened, humanity was there; and he who does not love human more than other nature has not life in

himself, does not carry his poetry in him, as Gibbie did, therefore cannot find it except where it has been shown to him. Neither was a common house like this by any means devoid of things to please him. If there was not the lovely homeliness of the cottage which at once gave all it had, there was a certain stateliness which afforded its own reception; if there was little harmony, there were individual colours that afforded him delight—as for instance, afterwards, the crimson covering the walls of the dining-room, whose colour was of that soft deep-penetrable character which a flock paper alone can carry. Then there were pictures, bad enough most of them, no doubt, in the eyes of the critic, but endlessly suggestive, therefore endlessly delightful to Gibbie. It is not the man who knows most about Nature that is hardest to please, however he may be hardest to satisfy, with the attempt to follow her. The accomplished poet will derive pleasure from verses which are a mockery to the soul of the unhappy mortal whose business is judgment—the most thankless of all labours, and justly so. Certain fruits one is unable to like until he has

eaten them in their perfection ; after that, the reminder in them of the perfect will enable him to enjoy even the inferior a little, recognizing their kind—always provided he be not one given to judgment—a connoisseur, that is one who cares less for the truth than for the knowing comparison of one embodiment of it with another. Gibbie's regard then, as it wandered round the room, lighting on this colour, and that texture, in curtain, or carpet, or worked screen, found interest and pleasure. Amidst the mere upholstery of houses and hearts, amidst the common life of the common crowd, he was, and had to be, what he had learned to be amongst the nobility and in the palace of Glashgar.

Mrs. Sclater, late Mrs. Bonniman, was the widow of a merchant who had made his money in foreign trade, and to her house Mr. Sclater had *flitted* when he married her. She was a well-bred woman, much the superior of her second husband in the small duties and graces of social life, and, already a sufferer in some of his not very serious *grossièretés*, regarded with no small apprehension the arrival of one in whom she expected the same kind of thing in.

largely exaggerated degree. She did not much care to play the mother to a bear-cub, she said to her friends, with a good-humoured laugh. "Just think," she added, "with such a childhood as the poor boy had, what a mass of vulgarity must be lying in that uncultivated brain of his! It is no small mercy, as Mr. Sclater says, that our ears at least are safe. Poor boy!"—She was a woman of about forty, rather tall, of good complexion tending to the ruddy, with black smooth shining hair parted over a white forehead, black eyes, nose a little aquiline, good mouth, and fine white teeth—together a handsome woman—some notion of whose style may be gathered from the fact that, upon the testimony of her cheval glass, she preferred satin to the richest of silks, and almost always wore it. Now and then she would attempt a change, but was always defeated and driven back into satin. She was precise in her personal rules, but not stiff in the manners wherein she embodied them : these were indeed just a little florid and wavy, a trifle profuse in their grace. She kept an excellent table, and every appointment about the house was *in good*

style—a favourite phrase with her. She was her own housekeeper, an exact mistress, but considerate, so that her servants had no bad time of it. She was sensible, kind, always responsive to appeal, had scarcely a thread of poetry or art in her upper texture, loved fair play, was seldom in the wrong, and never confessed it when she was. But when she saw it, she took some pains to avoid being so in a similar way again. She held hard by her own opinion; was capable of a mild admiration of truth and righteousness in another; had one or two pet commandments to which she paid more attention than to the rest; was a safe member of society, never carrying tales; was kind with condescension to the poor, and altogether a good wife for a minister of Mr. Sclater's sort. She knew how to hold her own with any who would have established superiority. A little more coldness, pride, indifference, and careless restraint, with just a touch of rudeness, would have given her the freedom of the *best* society, if she could have got into it. Altogether it would not have been easy to find one who could do more for Gibbie in respect of the social *rappports*.

that seemed to await him. Even some who would gladly themselves have undertaken the task, admitted that he might have fallen into much less qualified hands. Her husband was confident that, if anybody could, his wife would make a gentleman of Sir Gilbert; and he ought to know, for she had done a good deal of polishing upon him.

She was now seated on a low chair at the other side of the fire, leaning back at a large angle, slowly contemplating out of her black eyes the lad on the footstool, whose blue eyes she saw wandering about the room, in a manner neither vague nor unintelligent, but showing more of interest than of either surprise or admiration. Suddenly he turned them full upon her; they met hers, and the light rushed into them like a torrent, breaking forth after its way in a soulful smile. I hope my readers are not tired of the mention of Gibbie's smiles: I can hardly avoid it; they were all Gibbie had for the small coin of intercourse; and if my readers care to be just, they will please to remember that they have been spared many a *he said* and *she said*. Unhappily for me there is no way of

giving the delicate differences of those smiles. Much of what Gibbie perhaps felt the more that he could not say it, had got into the place where the smiles are made, and like a variety of pollens, had impregnated them with all shades and colours of expression, whose varied significance those who had known him longest, dividing and distinguishing, had gone far towards being able to interpret. In that which now shone on Mrs. Sclater, there was something, she said the next day to a friend, which no woman could resist, and which must come of his gentle blood. If she could have seen a few of his later ancestors at least, she would have doubted if they had anything to do with that smile beyond its mere transmission from "the first stock-father of gentleness." She responded, and from that moment the lady and the shepherd lad were friends.

Now that a real introduction had taken place between them, and in her answering smile Gibbie had met the lady herself, he proceeded, in most natural sequence, without the smallest shyness or suspicion of rudeness, to make himself acquainted with the phenomena presenting

her. As he would have gazed upon a rainbow, trying perhaps to distinguish the undistinguishable in the meeting and parting of its colours, only that here behind was the all-powerful love of his own, he began to examine the lady's face and form, dwelling and contemplating with eyes innocent as any baby's. This lasted; but did not last long before it began to produce in the lady a certain uncertain embarrassment, a something she did not quite understand, therefore could not account for, and did not like. Why should she mind eyes such as those making acquaintance with what a whole congregation might see any Sunday at church, or for that matter, the whole city on Monday, if it pleased to look upon her as she walked shopping in Pearl-street? Why indeed? Yet she began to grow restless, and feel as if she wanted to let down her veil. She could have risen and left the room, but she had "no notion" of being thus put to flight by her bear-cub; she was ashamed that a woman of her age and experience should be so foolish; and besides, she wanted to come to an understanding with herself as to what herself meant by it. She did

not feel that the boy was rude; she was not angry with him as with one taking a liberty; yet she did wish he would not look at her like that; and presently she was relieved.

Her hands, which had been lying all the time in her lap, white upon black, had at length drawn and fixed Gibbie's attention. They were very lady-like hands, long-fingered, and with the orthodox long-oval nails, each with a quarter segment of a pale rising moon at the root—hands nearly faultless, and, I suspect, considered by their owner entirely such—but a really faultless hand, who has ever seen?—To Gibbie's eyes they were such beautiful things, that, after a moment or two spent in regarding them across the length of the hairy hearthrug, he got up, took his footstool, crossed with it to the other side of the fire, set it down by Mrs. Sclater, and reseated himself. Without moving more than her fine neck, she looked down on him curiously, wondering what would come next; and what did come next was, that he laid one of his hands on one of those that lay in the satin lap; then, struck with the contrast between them, burst out laughing. But he

neither withdrew his hand, nor showed the least shame of the hard, brown, tarry-seamed, strong, though rather small prehensile member, with its worn and blackened nails, but let it calmly remain outspread, side by side with the white, shapely, spotless, gracious and graceful thing, adorned, in sign of the honour it possessed in being the hand of Mrs. Sclater,—it was her favourite hand,—with a half hoop of fine blue-green turkises, and a limpid activity of many diamonds. She laughed also—who could have helped it? that laugh would have set silver bells ringing in responsive sympathy!—and patted the lumpy thing which, odd as the fact might be, was also called a hand, with short little pecking pats: she did not altogether like touching so painful a degeneracy from the ideal. But his very evident admiration of hers, went far to reconcile her to his,—as was but right, seeing a man's admirations go farther to denote him truly, than the sort of hands or feet either he may happen to have received from this or that vanished ancestor. Still she found his presence—more than his proximity—discomposing, and was glad when Mr. Sclater,

who, I forgot to mention, had left the room, returned and took Gibbie away to show him his, and instruct him what changes he must make upon his person in preparation for dinner.

When Mrs. Sclater went to bed that night she lay awake a good while thinking, and her main thought was—what could be the nature of the peculiar feeling which the stare of the boy had roused in her? Nor was it long before she began to suspect that, unlike her hand beside his, she showed to some kind of disadvantage beside the shepherd lad. Was it dissatisfaction then with herself that his look had waked? She was aware of nothing in which she had failed or been in the wrong of late. She never did anything to be called wrong—by herself, that is, or indeed by her neighbours. She had never done anything *very* wrong, she thought; and anything wrong she had done, was now so far away and so nearly forgotten, that it seemed to have left her almost quite innocent; yet the look of those blue eyes, searching, searching, without seeming to know it, made her feel something like the discomfort of a dream of expected visitors, with her house not quite in a

condition to receive them. She must see to her hidden house. She must take dust-pan and broom and go about a little. For there are purifications in which king and cowboy must each serve himself. The things that come out of a man are they that defile him, and to get rid of them, a man must go into himself, be a convict, and scrub the floor of his cell. Mrs. Sclater's cell was very tidy and respectable for a cell, but no human consciousness can be *clean*, until it lies wide open to the eternal sun, and the all-potent wind ; until, from a dim-lighted cellar, it becomes a mountain-top.

CHAPTER XIX.

INITIATION.

MRS. SCLATER'S first piece of business the following morning was to take Gibbie to the most fashionable tailor in the city, and have him measured for such clothes as she judged suitable for a gentleman's son. As they went through the streets, going and returning, the handsome lady walking with the youth in the queer country-made clothes, attracted no little attention, and most of the inhabitants who saw them, having by this time heard of the sudden importance of their old acquaintance, wee Sir Gibbie, and the search after him, were not long in divining the secret of the strange conjunction. But although Gibbie seemed as much at home with the handsome lady as if she had been his own mother, and walked by her side with a step

and air as free as the wind upon Glasbgar, he felt anything but comfortable in his person. For here and there Tammy Breeks's seams came too close to his skin, and there are certain kinds of hardship which, though the sufferer be capable of the patience of Job, will yet fret. Gibbie could endure cold or wet or hunger, and sing like a mavis; he had borne pain upon occasion with at least complete submission; but the tight arm-holes of his jacket could hardly be such a decree of Providence as it was rebellion to interfere with; and therefore I do not relate what follows, as a pure outcome of that benevolence in him which was yet equal to the sacrifice of the best fitting of garments. As they walked along Pearl-street, the handsomest street of the city, he darted suddenly from Mrs. Sclater's side, and crossed to the opposite pavement. She stood and looked after him wondering; hitherto he had broken out in no vagaries! As he ran, worse and worse! he began tugging at his jacket, and had just succeeded in getting it off as he arrived at the other side, in time to stop a lad of about his own size, who was walking bare-footed and in his shirt sleeves—if *shirt*

or *sleeves* be a term applicable to anything visible upon him. With something of the air of the tailor who had just been waiting upon himself, but with as much kindness and attention as if the boy had been Donal Grant instead of a stranger, he held the jacket for him to put on. The lad lost no time in obeying, gave him one look and nod of gratitude, and ran down a flight of steps to a street below, never doubting his benefactor an idiot, and dreading some one to whom he belonged would be after him presently to reclaim the gift. Mrs. Sclater saw the proceeding with some amusement and a little foreboding. She did not mourn the fate of the jacket; had it been the one she had just ordered, or anything like it, the loss would have been to her not insignificant: but was the boy altogether in his right mind? She in her black satin on the opposite pavement, and the lad scudding down the stair in the jacket, were of similar mind concerning the boy, who, in shirt sleeves indubitable, now came bounding back across the wide street. He took his place by her side as if nothing had happened, only that he went along swinging his arms as if he had just been deliver-

ed from manacles. Having for so many years roamed the streets with scarcely any clothes at all, he had no idea of looking peculiar, and thought nothing more of the matter.

But Mrs. Sclater soon began to find that even in regard to social externals, she could never have had a readier pupil. He watched her so closely, and with such an appreciation of the difference in things of the kind between her and her husband, that for a short period he was in danger of falling into habits of movement and manipulation too dainty for a man, a fault happily none the less objectionable in the eyes of his instructress, that she, on her own part, carried the feminine a little beyond the limits of the natural. But here also she found him so readily set right, that she imagined she was going to do anything with him she pleased, and was not a little proud of her conquest, and the power she had over the young savage. She had yet to discover that Gibbie had his own ideas too, that it was the general noble teachableness and affection of his nature that had brought about so speedy an understanding between them in everything wherein he saw she

could show him the better way, but that nowhere else would he feel bound or inclined to follow her injunctions. Much and strongly as he was drawn to her by her ladyhood, and the sense she gave him of refinement and familiarity with the niceties, he had no feeling that she had authority over him. So neglected in his childhood, so absolutely trusted by the cottagers, who had never found in him the slightest occasion for the exercise of authority, he had not an idea of owing obedience to any but the One. Gifted from the first with a heart of devotion, the will of the Master set the will of the boy upon the throne of service, and what he had done from inclination he was now capable of doing against it, and would most assuredly do against it if ever occasion should arise: what other obedience was necessary to his perfection? For his father and mother and Donal he had reverence—profound and tender, and for no one else as yet among men; but at the same time something far beyond respect for every human shape and show. He would not, could not make any of the social distinctions which to Mr. and Mrs. Sclater

seemed to belong to existence itself, and their recognition essential to the living of their lives; whence it naturally resulted that upon occasion he seemed to them devoid of the first rudiments of breeding, without respect or any notion of subordination.

Mr. Sclater was conscientious in his treatment of him. The very day following that of their arrival, he set to work with him. He had been a tutor, was a good scholar, and a sensible teacher, and soon discovered how to make the most of Gibbie's facility in writing. He was already possessed of a little Latin, and after having for some time accustomed him to translate from each language into the other, the minister began to think it might be of advantage to learning in general, if at least half the boys and girls at school, and three parts of every Sunday congregation, were as dumb as Sir Gilbert Galbraith. When at length he set him to Greek, he was astonished at the avidity with which he learned it. He had hardly got him over *τύπτω*, when he found him one day so intent upon the Greek Testament, that, exceptionally keen of hearing as he was, he was quite

unaware that anyone had entered the room.

What Gibbie made of Mr. Sclater's prayers, either in congregational or family devotion, I am at some loss to imagine. Beside his memories of the direct fervid outpouring and appeal of Janet, in which she seemed to talk face to face with God, they must have seemed to him like the utterances of some curiously constructed wooden automaton, doing its best to pray, without any soul to be saved, any weakness to be made strong, any doubt to be cleared, any hunger to be filled. What can be less like religion than the prayers of a man whose religion is his profession, and who, if he were not "in the church," would probably never pray at all? Gibbie, however, being the reverse of critical, must, I can hardly doubt, have seen in them a good deal more than was there—a pitiful faculty to the man who cultivates that of seeing in everything less than is there.

To Mrs. Sclater, it was at first rather depressing, and for a time grew more and more painful, to have a live silence by her side. But when she came into rapport with the natural utterance of the boy, his presence grew more

like a constant speech, and that which was best in her was not unfrequently able to say for the boy what he would have said could he have spoken: the nobler part of her nature was in secret alliance with the thoughts and feelings of Gibbie. But this relation between them, though perceptible, did not become at all plain to her until after she had established more definite means of communication. Gibbie, for his part, full of the holy simplicities of the cottage, had a good many things to meet which disappointed, perplexed, and shocked him. Middling good people are shocked at the wickedness of the wicked; Gibbie, who knew both so well, and what ought to be expected, was shocked only at the wickedness of the righteous. He never came quite to understand Mr. Sclater: the inconsistent never can be *understood*. That only which has absolute reason in it can be understood of man. There is a bewilderment about the very nature of evil which only he who made us capable of evil that we might be good, can comprehend.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.



